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Veera Kallioniemi

Improvement of Natural Cosmetics Online Services

– Customer experience in Ruohonjuuri's online
store



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Veera Kallioniemi

Improvement of Natural Cosmetics Online Services

- Customer experience in Ruohonjuuri's online store

The aim of the present Master's thesis is to create a concept for improving natural cosmetics online services in Ruohonjuuri's online store. The research questions were: How to improve natural cosmetics online services? How to help customers with decision-making when purchasing expensive natural cosmetics?

The topic is relevant because customers are purchasing more and more online. Individuals' everyday lives are full of decisions in digital environments. The study utilizes qualitative and quantitative research methods and tools such as brainstorming, benchmarking, workshops, surveys, and structured one-on-one interviews. The study shows that, among the touchpoints, the navigation features have the most significant impact on creating a successful customer experience. One of the outcomes is that customers appreciated clear and categorized product pages. The main objective of the client company is to get valuable insight into developing their online store's natural cosmetics services and customer experience further.

Keywords:

Customer experience, digitalization, digital nudging, natural cosmetics

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Veera Kallioniemi

Luonnonkosmetiikan palvelujen kehittäminen verkossa

- Asiakaskokemus Ruohonjuuren verkkokaupassa

Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus oli luoda uusi konsepti Ruohonjuuren verkkokaupan luonnonkosmetiikka palvelujen kehittämiseksi. Tutkimuskysymykset olivat: Miten kehittää luonnonkosmetiikan palveluita verkossa? Miten auttaa asiakkaita ostopäätöksen tekemisessä kalliimpaa luonnonkosmetiikkaa ostettaessa?

Aihe on ajankohtainen, koska asiakkaat ostavat tänä päivänä yhä enemmän verkkokaupoista. Päätökset digitaalisessa ympäristössä ovat jokapäiväistyneet. Tutkimus on sekä kvantitatiivinen että kvalitatiivinen. Tutkimusmenetelminä käytettiin aivoriihiä, vertailuanalyysiä, ryhmätyökursseja, kyselyitä ja strukturoituja yksilöhaastatteluja. Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että kosketuspisteistä tuotteiden navigoinnilla oli eniten vaikutusta onnistuneeseen asiakaskokemukseen. Tutkimuksen mukaan asiakkaat arvostivat myös tuotteiden selkeää kategorisointia. Tärkein tavoite toimeksiantajalle oli saada arvokasta näkemystä siitä, miten luonnonkosmetiikan palveluita verkkokaupassa voitaisiin kehittää.

Asiasanat:

Asiakaskokemus, digitalisaatio, digituuppaus, luonnonkosmetiikka

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List of abbreviations

BOS	Blue Ocean Strategy
CX	Customer experience
TCX	Total customer experience

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

Digitalization is starting to be more common in everyday life. People work, study, date, and last but not least, they purchase online. Nowadays, everything is easy to access with only one click. Therefore, consumers are more demanding than ever before. However, the standard is standard, and online stores have specific demands. Customers' needs have to be fulfilled. Fulfilling basic customer experience standards often stays at an everyday routine level. To stand out from all the competitors in the market, customer experience (CX) has to be unique and outstanding.

More and more consumers care about sustainability and purely natural products. As a result, natural cosmetics sales will be growing in the future. If a company can provide specific product information and transparency, it can gain consumers' trust. According to Kurjenoja (2021), cosmetics sales in Finland are projected to increase to approximately 6% in 2022. Also, the makeup products growth forecast is even 15%. Skincare products are also expected to grow more than average. Demand for skincare products in Finland is the same as everywhere globally; antiaging products are popular, there is a demand for natural cosmetics, and Korean and Japanese beauty trends are popular.

Furthermore, due to the pandemic, consumers started new skincare routines caused by Teams and Zoom meetings. Kurjenoja (2021) refers to a German company specializing in marketing and consumer data; Statista's consumer survey claims that the essential standards for Finnish consumers when purchasing cosmetics are low price and product suitability for skin type. In addition, Germans, Russians, and Swedes choose products mainly based on quality. The pandemic boosted digital cosmetic sales permanently. In Finland, approximately 22% of all cosmetic purchases are made online. It is below average in Nordic countries and EU digital cosmetics buying.

The thesis author has been working in a Ruohonjuuri as a Store and Product Manager for several years. However, a request for this thesis came from the commissionaire due to the changing market situation. Through this work, I hope to give new insights on improving natural cosmetics services online and create a new concept in the form of the customer's journey in Ruohonjuuri's online store.

1.2 Research questions and methods

This thesis aims to find new ways to improve natural cosmetics services online. Based on customers' experiences and opinions, a customer journey map will be created. The thesis will provide insights into how to improve customer experience online.

The thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How to improve natural cosmetic online services?
2. How to help customers with decision-making when purchasing expensive natural cosmetics?

The first part of the thesis is quantitative with two questionnaires. The second part is qualitative, containing four structured one-on-one interviews.

This thesis utilizes qualitative and quantitative research with respective methods and tools such as; brainstorming, workshops, surveys, and structured one-on-one interviews, as presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Process chart.

1.3 Commissioner Ruohonjuuri

The commissioner of the thesis is Ruohonjuuri, a retail chain with a wide range of organic, healthcare products, and natural cosmetics. It was founded in 1982. (Ruohonjuuri n.d.-a.) Ruohonjuuri's vision is to be a brave pioneer in its field.

Ruohonjuuri has already reached a pioneer position in the Finnish market as an agile company.

Furthermore, as an agile company, it constantly follows changing market situations and upcoming trends and reacts quickly. Maintaining a position as a pioneer requires creativity, improvement, and new ideas. Ruohonjuuri's mission is to bring joy and vitality to customers and the work environment. (Ruohonjuuri n.d.-b.) In the strategy stage, the company's aim is "believing that the world will be a better place product by product and working together (Ruohonjuuri n.d.-c).

Ruohonjuuri's way of working is based on three promises for customers:

1. Having a positive attitude.
2. Being active in customer service.
3. Providing wow-effects.

(Ruohonjuuri intranet, 17.5.2022). These three promises will also be the cornerstones of this thesis.

The company has 15 stores in Finland. Ruohonjuuri's online store in Finland started in the Christmas season of 2011. The online store in Sweden has been operating since 2018 under the name Happy Food Store. In 2021 Ruohonjuuri opened an international online store delivering products within the EU and EEA. (Ruohonjuuri n.d.-a.) In 2021 Ruohonjuuri employed approximately 139 people in Finland (Ruohonjuuri, 2021). In 2021 Ruohonjuuri's online store was growing faster than its brick-and-mortar stores. Compared to the previous year, Ruohonjuuri's online store (Ruohonjuuri.fi) sales growth was +8,2%. (Paltola, 2022.)

On the other hand, in 2021, Ruohonjuuri's brick-and-mortar sales were challenging due to the pandemic, and total sales were down by almost -3,7% from the previous year. In addition, many suppliers have opened their own online stores for consumers, and supermarkets have widened their healthcare selection. Ruohonjuuri has been investing for future growth and developing digitalization as planned in their strategy. Due to the cuts and optimization of operations made by

the end of the year, 2021 sales revenue was up by a few hundred thousand euros. In the spring of 2022, Ruohonjuuri opened a new flagship store in the center of Helsinki. During the pandemic, Ruohonjuuri's online store sales have been growing. More extensive facilities and more automation are planned. Ruohonjuuri's vision for 2030 is to be an international game-changer, multiply positive effectiveness, and grow sustainably. (Paltola, 2022.)

2 Customer experience

2.1 Customer experience and digital time

According to Weber & Chatzopoulos, many companies see the importance of customer focus, customer orientation, and a perfect CX. Customers are more interested in functional and financial product properties and benefits than before. However, a satisfied customer is not always a sign of loyalty, additional revenue, or a larger market share. Therefore, companies must consider delivering linearly positive and personal CX to increase loyalty and customer support. In addition, these kinds of unique experiences can be challenging to create and manage. (Weber & Chatzopoulos, 2019, 201.)

Vesterinen defines CX as a crucial requirement for business success. In the 21st century, customers are in charge in many ways. Access to information is accessible through the internet. The purchasing process can happen quickly for a customer. (Vesterinen, 2014, 12.) From the 80s, the search for excellent quality has been one of the important business trends. Consumers demand great products accompanied by fast, reliable, and customer-friendly service. (Weinstein, 2012, 79.)

One of the biggest problems developing CX is understanding it incorrectly or limitedly. Often, management decides to bring CX to the center of its strategy, not thinking about what CX means and especially what it means to the company; the risk is that members of management will all define it in their own way. For example, one might interpret that CX means developing digitalization, and the other assumes that it is related to changes in marketing. The third one believes CX is service design. CX is connected to all of these and many other areas, and therefore building an insight together and describing its developed content is essential. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 42.)

Easiness is often mentioned when a customer is asked to define good CX. It has also been said to be crucial when making a difference. Where does the

experience of easiness come from? The main elements are easy to access, a smooth process, and a pleasant experience. (Korkiakoski & Gerdt, 2016, 229.)

Technology itself is not vital: the pursued outcome is essential. Developing Digital CX can be divided into three sectors: fast service, personalization, and user-friendliness, supported by a well-built technology environment. All these sectors are presented in Figure 2. These features have been highlighted when creating a customer experience, although digitalization has uplifted these three customer experience elements to a whole new level. (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 56-57.)

Customer service has to be fast. Realtime has reached customer service, giving feedback and diagnoses. Customers expect fast replies to questions, and impatience is increasing. Service must be real-time, available, and mainly automatized in the future. (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 57.)

Personalization

Personalization has been a mantra and goal regarding CX. Companies in their development projects have started from this point that customer service must feel personal. The first receiver's name was added to marketing letters, and segmentation was done by limiting customers to smaller groups. Nowadays, a feeling of personalization is not enough; CX must be personal. (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 57-58.)

User-friendliness

When web pages became more common, companies started to talk about user-friendliness. The first touch with customers happened digitally. Finding information and easy access started to be more of a focus; before, user-friendliness was attached more to products and logistics. Easy to use became the most significant factor in customer loyalty - research has shown a connection between user-friendliness and customer loyalty. (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 58-59.) Customer loyalty increases when experiences are positive and easy. In the long run, this will strengthen customer life cycle value. (Filenius, 2015, 34.)

Technology environment

The fourth development sector is the technology environment. Without a good IT infrastructure developing Digi time CX is highly challenging. It is hard to name any CX process where technology is not playing at least some part. Artificial intelligence always needs a human side, but by utilizing it, skills can be overcome in unforeseen ways, just like industrial machines helped with physical limitations. (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 59.) Therefore, Webb recommends that organizations have an integrated power plan that includes both digital and non-digital channels. Many ranges of technologies would be good for identifying what customers need and want and how to create better solutions for users. In this way, powerful insight-gaining potential is used for a good purpose - to understand what customers love and what they hate deeply. (Webb, 2017, 218.)

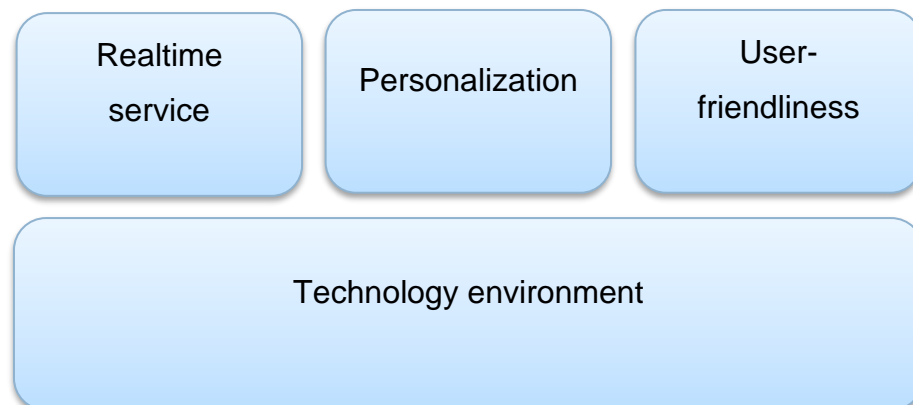


Figure 2. The four development areas of customer experience (Gerdt & Eskelinen, 2018, 57).

2.2 Effectiveness, easiness, and emotions

Good CX means effectiveness, easiness, and emotions for a customer, as Figure 3 presents. Therefore, the company should consider this when planning and evaluating its CX strategy and development plan. As mentioned previously, CX potential has been seen as too limited, and the focus has been mainly on effectiveness and easiness. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 49.)

Effectiveness

Effectiveness represents a company's internal processes' functionality and fluency and how added value is created for customers. Effectiveness can be seen as, for example, an online connection works well, products are available, products do what they promise, and customer data is correct. Effectiveness is easy to execute. Still, online stores' global growth has been a challenge for many companies because they have not been able to change their operation to respond to customers' needs and expectations. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 49-51.)

Easiness

Easiness means for a customer that purchasing is easy. In practice, the company has successfully served customers in selected channels and moments. Easiness can also mean that customers' needs and concerns will be handled at once. For example, a customer can contact the company quickly; a customer does not have to explain the same issue many times, and changing a channel has been made easy. Customer service has been digitalized in many ways, and more often, the customer has to manage different online services independently. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 49-51.)

Emotions

According to Korkiakoski, emotions, a CX third element, is the most challenging sector. But, at the same time, it is the most remarkable because feelings have a significant role in CX. Creating emotions is complex because emotions are individual and connected to the situation. The feeling results from one CX or

customer relationship, for example, personal customer service and exceeding expectations. Developing emotions in CX can be through training salespeople to address customers personally, identifying CX touchpoints, and investing more, especially in personal interaction. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 49-51.)



Figure 3. Effectiveness, easiness, and emotions (Korkiakoski, 2019, 51).

2.3 Customer experience types

Korkiakoski defines CX as customers’ opinions about the company, built in several touchpoints, by emotions created by the company and customers’ new and old images. Due to digitalization, there are more touchpoints than earlier, although the company does not always control them. (Korkiakoski, 2019, 19.) CX is always individual and personal. Emotions and images are indisputable in person. The customer is always right because he interprets it from his point of view – and no one can argue with that. (Filenius, 2015, 25.)

Rossman et al. present a framework that consists of the following five experience types: prosaic, memorable, meaningful, and transformational, as Figure 4 illustrates. Key characteristics describe different types. Beginning with mindful experiences, the key features are cumulative. Because when moving across types, they are built on each other. For example, the key characteristics of memorable experiences, emotion, are also found in meaningful experiences and their unique feature, discovery. In presenting each experience type, at first, a name must be identified, defining its key characteristic and then discussing the

elements that define the experience type's placement within the framework. (Rossman et al. 2019, 32-33.)

There are a variety of different kinds of experiences. The majority of these experiences are not so unique. Routine behavior is followed by those moments in the flow of life. When consuming and using products and services as routine, a limit for expectations has been set based on previous experiences to a standard and safe level. There are expectations for prosaic experiences; therefore, customer satisfaction often remains mild and neutral; action is led by routine and learned behavior, and extremely pleasant or unpleasant experiences are not experienced. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 66.) Also, human beings evaluate experiences with rational and emotional criteria. CX is not only about what to receive but also about how to receive it and the emotions that are included. Also, prosaic experiences can offer experiences that cross expectations. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 67.) These experiences are often part of the CX, although they are not designed to be memorable. Well-designed prosaic experiences help end-users avoid memorable negative experiences because they unnecessarily eliminate touchpoints that consume mental energy. (Rossman et al. 2019, 33.)

Prosaic experiences become mindful experiences when shifting out of mental autopilot, and they are combined with effortful mental activity, shifting from fast to slow thinking. In a book, *Designing Experiences*, Rossman et al. present that Dewey defined that the difference between mindful experiences and prosaic experiences is that during a mindful experience, the brain shifts from autopilot to knowing what is going on. (Rossman et al. 2019, 34.) It can be caused by small but unexpected touchpoints that catch interest. In the best case, this kind of regular touchpoint in a customer journey that was not discovered earlier can be positive and support a good CX. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 67-77.)

Mindful experiences can be changed into memorable ones by emotions. Rossman et al. refer to Kahneman's and his colleagues' research, supporting a connection between emotions and memories. Their research suggests that experiences are remembered in the moment and appear differently afterward. Even though experiences are evaluated from moment to moment as they occur,

peaks, pits, and ends are most often remembered. It is often called the “peak and rule” principle. Moments that produce the strongest emotions create the strongest memories. (Rossman et al. 2019, 36.) When designing customer experiences, it is good to consider if it is possible to consciously build a touchpoint or touchpoints which are meant to be a peak. These peaks could be, getting a main dish in a restaurant, when entering a fun park with kids (perhaps also when leaving from the fun park, or receiving a package from an online store, the so-called unboxing stage. Organizations should be aware of meaningful touchpoints for customers and try to strengthen emotions to create a better CX. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 68-69.)

Although experiences with positive emotions are usually what designers want to create, strategies for negative emotions and addressing them should be considered. Manipulating cues must be done to facilitate the recall of positive emotions and memories. It must be certain that the cues do not lead to recalling negative memories. Fortunately, experiences that originally produced negative emotions can be opportunities to predict and correct experience failures. (Rossman et al. 2019, 36-37.) CX, which were good, bad, or somehow extreme, are always shared the most online. Horror stories are shared on social media and other online platforms, such as blogs and review sites when a flatline happens, and things go wrong. (Stratten & Kramer, 2014, 20.) Often people react stronger to negative customer experiences than positive ones. In a way, this is good for the company because it keeps companies on their toes and forces them to do their best at every customer service touchpoint. It is good to remember that sometimes behind the negative reviews are competitors and ex-employees who are on a mission to hurt the company. Although more common than sabotage, there is a genuine human willingness to help and show their expertise. People offer support and respond because they know they might also need help sometimes. (Isokangas & Vassinen, 2010, 170.)

Meaningful experiences increase self-knowledge and widen the worldview. Those experiences are meaningful because they speak to values, are personal, and even modify identity. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 69.) Discovery is the key

characteristic that differentiates a meaningful experience from a memorable one. Participants often have an active role in meaningful experiences as they are often the result of co-creation. (Rossman et al. 2019, 37.)

Specific experiences will have a profound effect on individualization. However, these experiences are infrequent, and their profundity is often not recognized immediately. Therefore, transformational experiences lead directly to personal changes caused by the experience. Transformational experiences contain all the characteristics of the reviewed nonprosaic experience types: reflection, emotion, and discovery. The main feature is a significant change (Rossman et al. 2019, 38.) A best-case company can produce experiences that will lead to recommendations. When a company makes standard and specialized experiences, it will get recommendations. Therefore, CX is about emotions, not only technical success in touchpoints. When customers are satisfied, they feel that the company and its employees are genuinely interested in their needs and want to provide the best possible service. (Korkiakoski & Gerdt, 2016, 45-46.)

Being emotionally connected with customers, an organization must create an exhaustive, unique, and sensory-stimulating total customer experience (TCX) that will resonate with customers and differentiate a company from its competitors. TCX includes all the touchpoints with the organization or brand. Customers are constantly looking for more meaningful experiences to improve their life. In addition, companies can come closer to customers through technological advances and social and global trends. (Weber & Chatzopoulos, 2019, 202.)

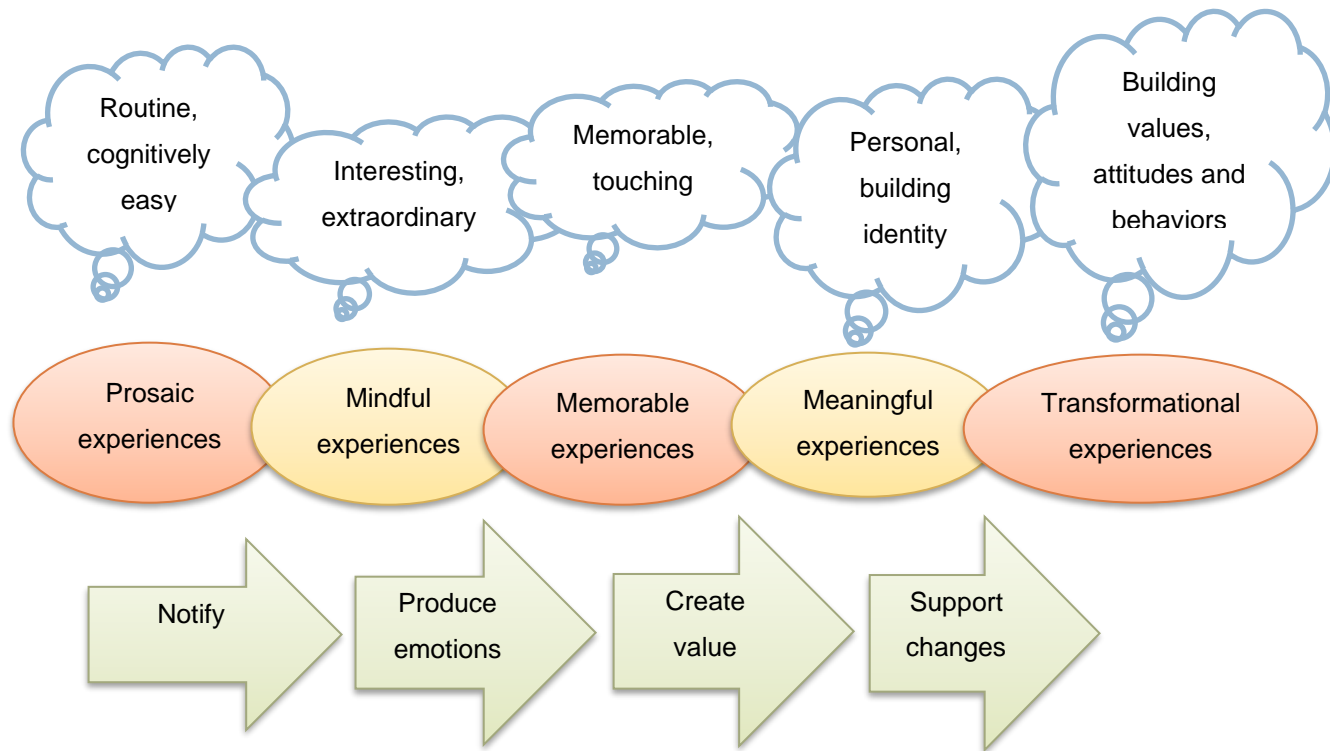


Figure 4. Experience types and key characteristics (modified Rossman et al. 2019, 40).

2.4 Planning and improving customer experience

Blue ocean strategy (BOS) can be defined as a new market where there is very little or no competition. It is a market with no pricing pressure because not many companies operate there yet. (The Economic Times, 2022.) Because competition in the market is between customer experiences, therefore BOS provides a perfect toolset to support customer experience strategy. BOS aims to recognize whole new opportunities for totally new customer experiences. The blue oceans strategist's main idea is to find further competitive advantages. (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 164.)

As one can see from Kim & Mauborgne's the four actions framework (Figure 5), it is based on four key questions. These questions help understand the challenges of an industry's strategic logic and business model to arrive at blue ocean moves that break the trade-off between differentiation and low cost. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 220.)

Eliminate

“Which factors that the industry takes for granted should be eliminated?” This question considers eliminating factors that the industry has competition. These factors are rarely questioned because they have been practiced for a long time. Often these factors no longer add value; quite the opposite, they may even decrease it. Sometimes, organizations are focused on benchmarking one another and not acting on it. Or even having insight about fundamental changes in what buyers value. Because these factors lean an organization’s cost structure for little to no result, substantial cost savings can be eliminated. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 220-221.)

Reduce

“Which factors should be reduced well below the industry’s standard?” This question determines whether products or services have been overdesigned in the competitive market. Here without gaining anything, organizations over-serve customers. By reducing these factors, costs can be decreased further. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 221.)

Raise

“Which factors should be raised well above the industry's standard?” This question uncovers and eliminates the compromises customers are forced to make. Sometimes customers want more than what the standard can offer. However, often the standard is not challenged because of the limitedness of thinking. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 221.)

Create

“Which factors that the industry has never offered should be created?” This last question drives offering entirely new value for buyers and creates new demand by converting once noncustomers into customers. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 221.)

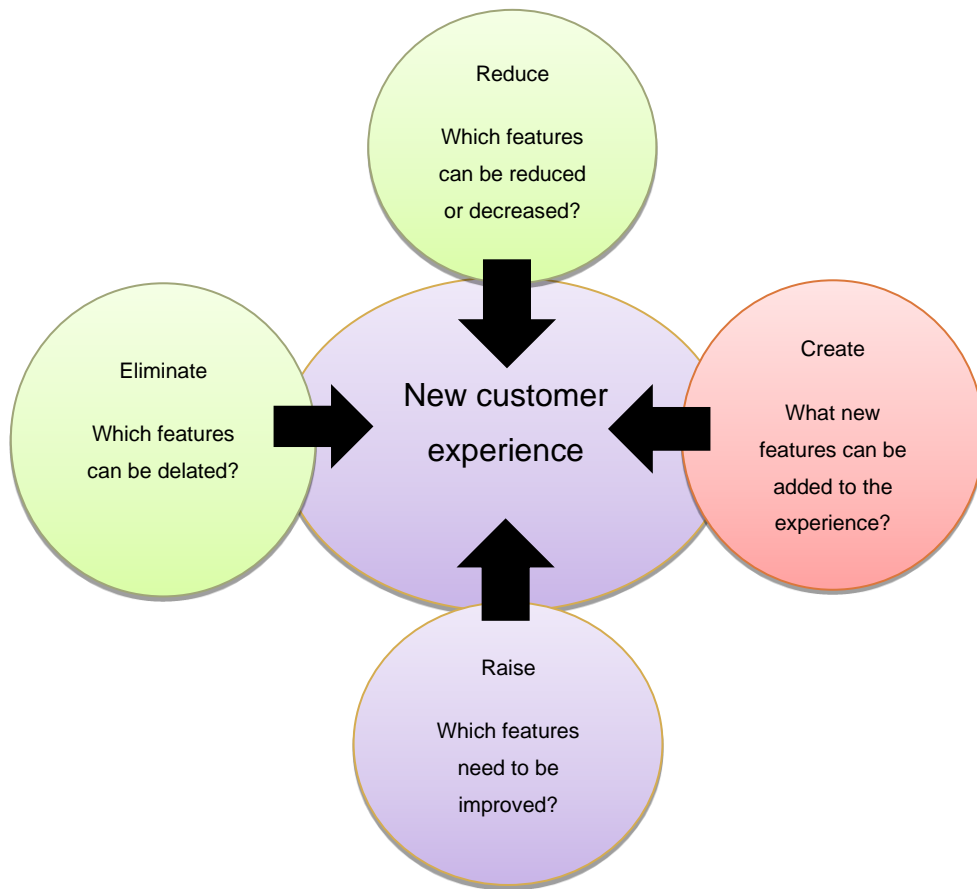


Figure 5. The Four Actions Framework (modified Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 220).

2.5 Customer journey and personas

The customer journey map illustrates a customer's steps to engage with a company (Richardson, 2010). Touchpoints must be identified by generating user insights. This can be done with interviews, or for example, blogs and video diaries can provide insights when creating the map. When touchpoints have been identified, they can be connected as a visual map of the total customer

experience. (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011,158.) Customer journey maps are diagrams that describe the elements of a CX in compact terms. A customer journey map helps provide linear and predictable CX. Also, finding and fixing problems can be done with this method. The customer journey presents an overview from the customers' point of view and increases customer loyalty. Different departments can discuss and develop consistent and superior CX with a customer journey map. Pain points can be defined, and resources can be used to fix them. (Curedale, 2016, 256.)

Personas are fictional profiles that represent one participant or multiple participants. Information about individuals who present participant groups needs to be collected when building personas. (Rossman et al. 2019, 93.) Often personas are developed from research results gathered by using, for example, stakeholder maps, shadowing, and interviews. In addition, other perspectives to define and engage with different target groups in the market can be provided using personas. Finally, even though personas are often fictional, they describe customers' wants and needs, motivations, and reactions to the company's service. (Schneider & Stickdorn, 2011, 178.)

2.6 Digital nudging

Thaler & Sunstein claim that sometimes people need to be paternalized to make better decisions. They describe a nudge as follows:

“any aspect of choice architecture that alters people’s behavior in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.”

(Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, 6.)

Kahneman presents that nudges help customers make better decisions without limiting their freedom (Kahneman, 2011, 413). People may need nudges most for decisions that are difficult to make and offer poor feedback. The question is, can free markets solve people’s problems in these circumstances? Even though market competition can do a lot of good, sometimes people’s frailties can be used as advantages. (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009, 84.) A nudge’s purpose is to lead

customers to adopt a new behavior. Nudges combine psychology and economics to understand and guide customers with decision-making. Digital nudges can be done with basic online technologies such as SMS text messages, email, push notifications, and mobile apps. Digital nudges are often simple and inexpensive ways to affect people's thinking, and they can also provide information to the company. In addition, tech-based nudges can be customized to show up when needed. (Fetherston et al. 2017, 2.)

Digital environments, such as online stores, are full of choices, and the purchasing decision is often made by how those options are presented, often with nudges. Designers can affect customers' decisions by nudging them toward choices. Customers are nudged in digital environments daily – it makes nudges a powerful tool in any designer's toolbox. (Schneider et al. 2018, 67-68.)

Understanding digital nudges is essential because the number of choices made in the digital environment increases. User-interface designers are influencing people's decisions knowingly or unknowingly. User-interface focus is often more on usability and aesthetics than the potential behavioral effects of alternative designs. With digital nudges, an organization's goals can be supported. (Schneider et al. 2018, 72.)

One important feature to note is that nudges should be tailored based on a decision maker's personality. This is because a single nudge does not always fit everyone. In addition, big-data analytics can be used to analyze users' past decisions, cognitive styles, and emotional states. As a result, designers can modify nudges based on organizational goals and user characteristics. Digital choice environment designers should be aware of its effects on users' decisions. (Schneider et al. 2018, 73.)

3 Research

3.1 Brainstorming, benchmarking, and workshops

The research started by brainstorming with the Ruohonjuuri Digital team, including three people and the thesis author. Team members were an E-commerce Manager, a Digital Marketing Manager, and a Digital Marketing Coordinator. Brainstorming is a group activity where problems and issues are discussed to find solutions (Curedale, 2016, 77). The first workshop was held online on September 16, 2021. The Commissioner's wish was to find out how to improve natural cosmetics services online. How to make decision-making easier for the consumers? How important is it that cosmetics are natural versus traditional synthetic cosmetics? In which way could natural cosmetics services be improved? The Commissioner suggested first doing some observations about competitors.

The Commissioner provided a list of competitors, and benchmarking was done based on that. Also, other online stores from the same field were included. Figure 6 shows five online stores and their competitive advantages.

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E
<i>Competitive advantage</i>	Selling cosmetic samples	Even 60% cheaper prices compared to competitors	Has good offers	Fast handling claims	Professional customer service
	Supplier of natural cosmetics	Fast delivery	Reliable	New arrivals weekly	Offers added value by opening ingredients lists
	Huge selection of natural cosmetics	Has its own active Facebook group	Fast delivery	Good selection of natural cosmetics	Online courses about skincare

Figure 6. Competitors with competitive advantages.

The second workshop was on October 7, 2021. The draft of the survey questionnaire was presented and discussed, and changes were made based on that. This Google Forms questionnaire aimed to find out what kind of experience is good when purchasing natural cosmetics online. Besides that, the results of this questionnaire revealed competitors, and it was a good base for continuing benchmarking. The questionnaire was published on a Facebook group called "Luonnonkosmetiikka," and it was open for answers from October 17 to October 31, 2021. After reviewing the results, the third workshop was held on November 5, 2021. Besides outcomes and new ideas, the following questionnaire was discussed. That questionnaire would be addressed to the commissionaire's customers. The first questionnaire's results helped when doing this second survey.

The second questionnaire was sent to Ruohonjuuri's membership customers via a monthly newsletter email. First, it was sent on January 24, 2022. Within one week, the questionnaire received 89 responses. It was sent again on February 4, 2022, and by February 8, 2022, the total number of responses was 724. After compiling those results, a meeting with Ruohonjuuri's Digital team was held on March 11, 2022. This workshop decided that structured one-on-one interviews would be done to achieve more detailed information about specific questions and ideas. All points of view will be heard in four structured interviews with customers from different backgrounds. These interviews were held at the end of March and the first week of April 2022. Each interview was 20 to 30 minutes and followed a PowerPoint slide show with questionnaire results (Figure 7) and detailed questions. It was essential to show some results to get the interviewees into the topic and deeper into it. 19 respondents were interested in coming to the interview. The first idea was to have three to four persons from different age groups. The age group 20-29 was challenging to get in contact with. They did not answer to the interview invitation sent via email. Finally, four enthusiastic and helpful personas from age groups 30-39, 40-49, and 60-69 were willing to participate in structured one-on-one interviews. Those interviews provided detailed information and good ideas to improve further.

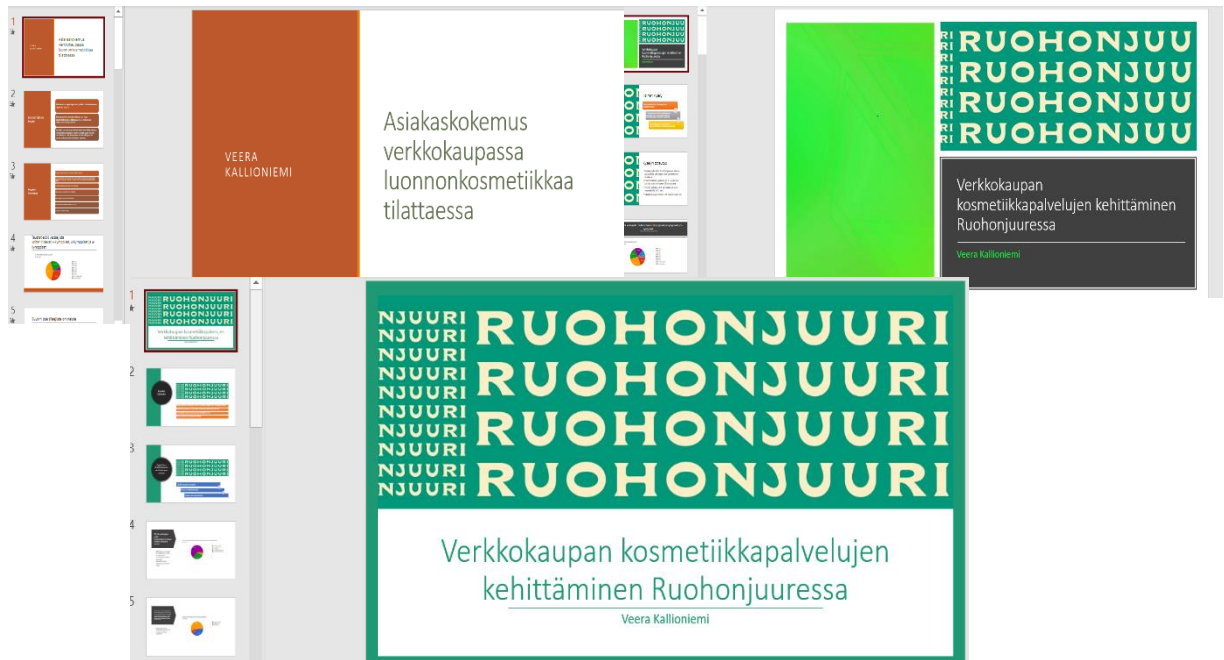


Figure 7. Two PowerPoints for workshops and one for one-on-one interviews.

3.2 First questionnaire review

The first questionnaire aimed to evaluate the online shopping users' experiences. The results from this questionnaire were used for benchmarking. This questionnaire's purpose was to collect data and ideas on how to develop the sale of natural cosmetics online. Also, consumer opinions on existing ideas were requested in order to determine if they were worth researching in a follow-up questionnaire.

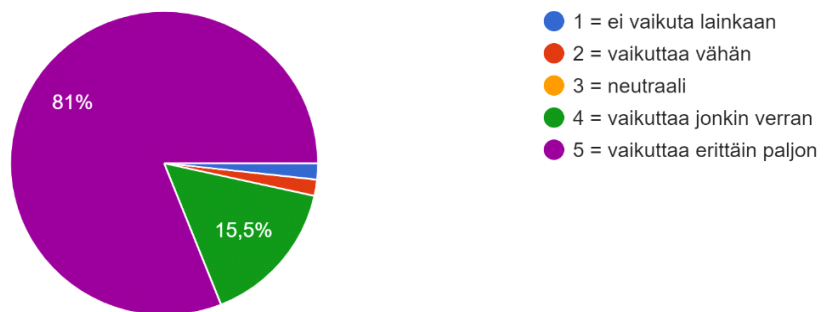
The questionnaire was open for answers from October 17 until the end of October 2021. It was published on a Facebook group called "Luonnonkosmetiikka" (Natural cosmetics), with 31,2 thousand members. This group was selected because it has many members and is the target market. The questionnaire was first published on Facebook on October 17, 2021. It was republished on Sunday,

October 24, 2021, and on Thursday, October 28, 2021. The total amount of responses was 58.

As seen in Figure 8, respondents were asked how important it is for them that cosmetics are natural compared to traditional cosmetics. 81% of respondents thought that it is very important that cosmetics are natural or organic. It was somewhat important for 15,5% of respondents if a product was natural. Only three respondents replied that it does not matter at all, or it matters somewhat if a product is natural or not. For this question, it is important to note that the group where the questionnaire was posted specializes in natural cosmetics, which possibly have had an influence on responses.

1. Miten tärkeänä asiana pidät sitä, että tuote on luonnonkosmetiikkaa?

58 vastausta



Blue = it does not matter at all, Red = it matters slightly, Yellow = neutral, Green = it matters somewhat, Purple= it matters a lot

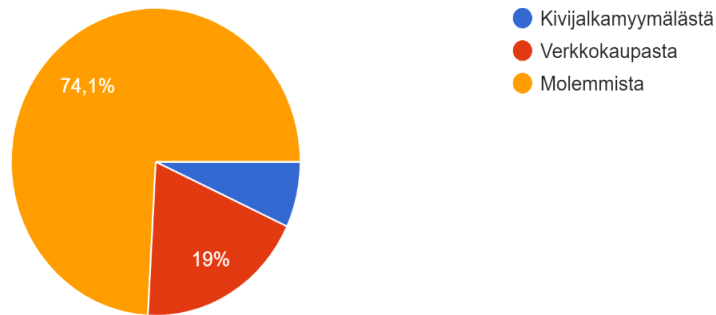
Figure 8. Importance of natural cosmetics versus synthetic cosmetics.

As Figure 9 presents, 74,1% of respondents of this questionnaire were multi-users, meaning they ordered natural cosmetics online and bought them from stores. 19% of respondents order online only, and 6,9% shop only in stores. Figure 10 below shows that among those who purchased natural cosmetics online, the majority ordered once in 3 months (24,6%), followed by those who ordered once in 2 months (22,8%). 14% of respondents ordered once in 6

months, and 14% once in 4 months. 7% answered that they ordered once a month or more often. Most respondents purchased their cosmetics from 2 to 8 different online stores.

2. Mistä ostat mieluummin luonnonkosmetiikkaa?

58 vastausta

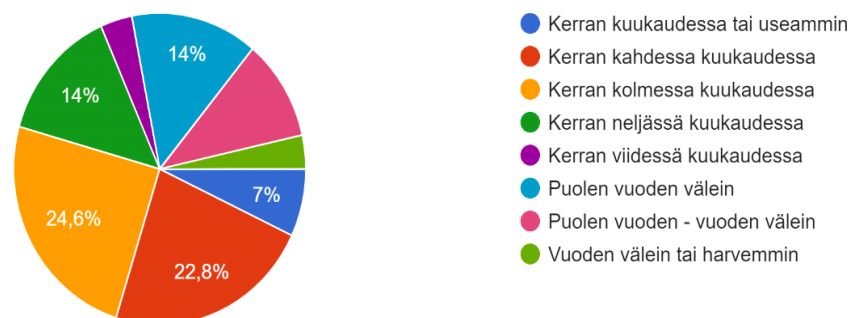


Blue = From brick and mortar stores, Red = From online stores, Yellow = From both

Figure 9. Where do you prefer to buy natural cosmetics?

3. Miten usein tilaat luonnonkosmetiikkaa verkkokaupasta?

57 vastausta



Blue = Once a month or more often, Red = Once in 2 months, Yellow = Once in 3 months, Green = Once in 4 months, Purple = Once in 5 months, Light blue = Once in 6 months, Pink = Once between 6 to 12 months, Light green = Once a year or more rearer

Figure 10. Ordering frequency.

The factors that influenced the respondents' choice of online store were reliability, good offers, and low prices. In comparison, the store's physical location did not matter that much. Also, a familiar and easy-to-use website was highly valued, followed by customer service, large selection, and ecological aspects. The opportunity to visit the online store's retail location was not essential for most of the respondents.

Customer experience

As one can see from Figure 11, in this questionnaire, 62,1% of the customer experiences could be described as prosaic experiences (routine, cognitively accessible). The share of mindful experiences was 24,1%. Mindful experiences were often about customer returns. A dispute was either handled satisfactorily or not. Customers were grateful if they felt that they were heard when they made a claim. Although an apology was necessary, they wanted compensation as well. The share of memorable experiences was 6,9%. Memorable experiences were described as touching and awakening emotions. Respondents also shared considerably negative experiences because those encounters affected their emotions. Respondents mentioned that web page failures, incorrect product information, and hard to read text were annoying.

In contrast, handwritten notes in a package made respondents feel very special. Only two respondents (3,4%) reported meaningful experiences. A meaningful experience was when customer service replied quickly about specific product information and offered some recommendations. Only two respondents (3,4%) had experienced transformational experiences. One transformational experience occurred when an online store put a lot of effort into customer service. As a result, they were able to advise the customer on cosmetic choices in a friendly and professional way. This experience affected the customer's behaviour and made her reconsider how she purchases cosmetics.

6. Asiakaskokemukset voivat olla luonteeltaan hyvin erityyppisiä. Mikä seuraavista vastaa parhaiten tyypillistä asiakaskokemustasi verkkokaupassa?

58 vastausta



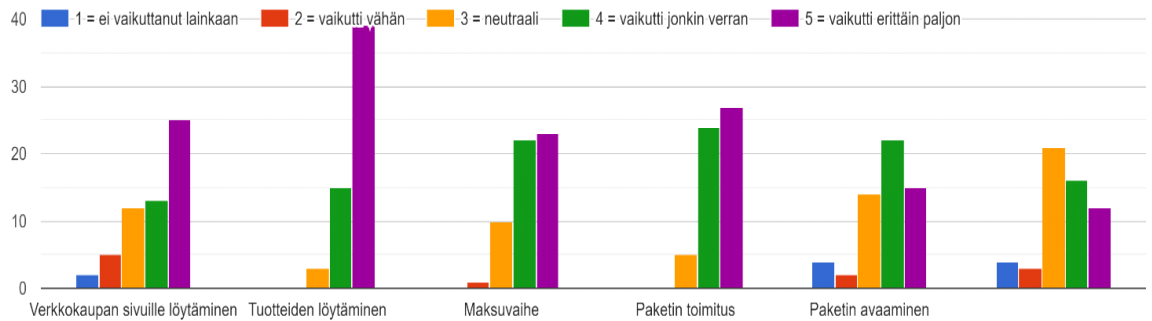
Blue = Prosaic experience; routine, Red = Mindful experience; extraordinary, Yellow = Memorable experience; touching, Green = Meaningful experience; personal, building identity, Purple = Transformational experience; building values, attitudes and behaviors

Figure 11. Experience types.

Customer journey

The online survey results indicate that the most critical stage of the buying process was navigating and finding products, as Figure 12 shows. In this questionnaire, 39 respondents replied that this had the most significant impact on a successful customer journey. In addition, 27 respondents highly valued a good delivery process. 25 respondents thought that finding the online store itself greatly contributed to the experience. 23 respondents appreciated an efficient payment process. Only 15 respondents felt that being able to reuse packaging and the unboxing process was very important. Most respondents mentioned that friendly customer service, easiness, fast response time, and deliveries matter the most for a pleasant buying experience. Figure 13 illustrates the Customer journey in online stores.

8. Muistele onnistunutta asiakaskokemusta verkkokaupassa. Mitkä kohdat asiakaspolusta vaikuttivat kokemuksen onnistumiseen?



Finding the online store, navigating products, payment, delivery, unboxing and contacting customer service

Blue = did not affect at all, Red = affected slightly, Yellow = neutral, Green = affected somewhat, Purple = affected a lot

Figure 12. Touchpoints' effects on good customer experience.

Customer journey map

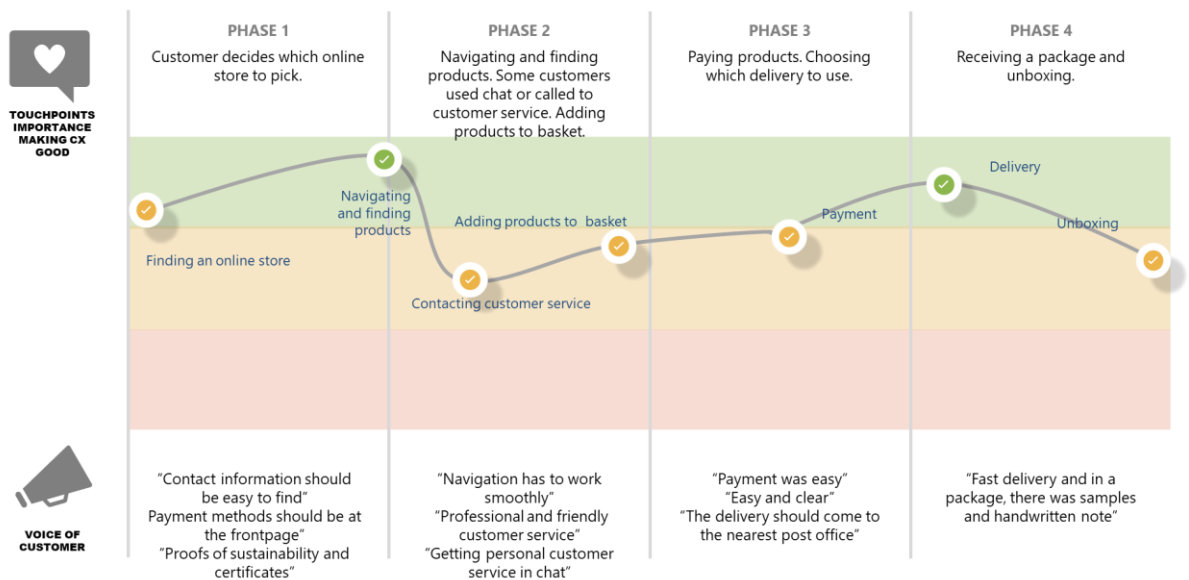
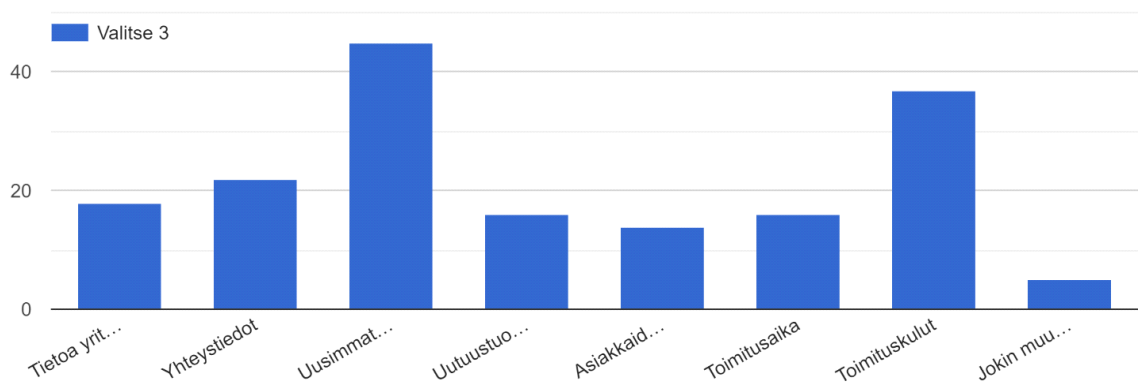


Figure 13. Customer journey map.

This questionnaire suggested services on how to help customers with decision-making when ordering expensive natural cosmetics. The most popular of all options was the ability to order free cosmetic samples. In this research, 37 respondents thought it would remarkably affect their decision. In addition, 22 respondents valued the chance to test cosmetics in a store. Also, 25 respondents liked to read other customers' recommendations and appreciated fast and reliable deliveries. Finally, 18 respondents thought the return policy should be as easy as possible.

Figure 14 shows that the most important things to see when visiting an online store were; the latest offers and campaigns (45), delivery costs (37), and customer service contact information (22). It was mentioned that it would be essential to have all information about the company on the front page. This is because consumers would like to know if the company is local or not. Also, they wish to see delivery costs on the front page or have a link to where that information can easily be found.

12. Mitkä 3 mielestäsi tärkeintä asiaa pitäisi näkyä heti verkkokaupan aloitussivulla?



Information about the company, customer service contact information, latest offers and campaigns, new products, customer recommendations, delivery time, delivery costs, or something else

Figure 14. The three most important pieces of content for an online store's front page.

Outcomes

The majority of respondents ordered after 2-3 months. Follow-up questions could be; “are customers ordering the same products every time?” and “would they be interested in a subscription service?”

Many respondents were ordering from 2-8 different online stores. Also, many of them were looking for good offers and campaigns. This can be correlated with why they ordered from several online stores. Then it becomes a question of brand loyalty. Customers' loyalty and membership are features that make customers order from the same online store. Engaging campaigns must be running continuously. Also, a unique concept makes customers stick to one online store. When sales representatives are professionals or have a degree in cosmetics, it builds customers' trust and makes them feel that they are getting more than just customer service. It elevates their experience.

Country of origin does not play a significant role in this questionnaire. However, there used to be a belief that domesticity equals reliability. This survey proves this to be wrong. Most respondents value reliability, but it does not matter that much regarding domesticity. Easy access to the online store's contact information builds respondents' trust. Some respondents mentioned that the company's name and the entrepreneurs' name or someone in charge should be on the front page or at least easy to find. Also, respondents wanted to know in which country an online store is located. It can also affect postage and shipping costs. Finally, some certificates of the company's sustainability could also gain customers' trust.

The majority of experiences were prosaic and mindful experiences, meaning that small, unexpected details made customers' day. Only a small percentage were memorable, meaningful, or transformative experiences called wow experiences. After all, even a tiny gesture mattered. For example, customers were happy when receiving a handwritten note with a package. On the other hand, the way

customer disputes were handled played a significant role when things went wrong. Customer disputes stir up many emotions, and it is a chance to make things even better for the customer or, in the worst case -- lose the customer entirely. For the majority, finding products easily had the greatest impact on creating a successful customer experience. For example, one respondent commented that color cosmetic subscriptions should be more detailed. Those subscriptions could be designed with the help of a cosmetologist. Respondents experienced unboxing as routine and unremarkable. Making unboxing more special with samples or small gifts could be one way to exceed expectations.

Free samples were highly welcomed. However, when asked about the possibility of buying samples, many respondents did not find the idea so attractive. Therefore, for the follow-up questionnaire, it would be interesting to find out the price customers would be willing to pay for those samples.

Surprisingly cosmetologists' chat services and virtual meetings with a cosmetologist did not get many votes. It would be good to ask further questions to find out why customers are not interested in this option.

3.3 Second questionnaire review

The second questionnaire was addressed to Ruohonjuuri's customers. It was included in the monthly newsletter email sent on January 24, 2022. Ruohonjuuri has 134 000 members who are subscribed to the monthly newsletter. Therefore, the questionnaire was sent to 25 000 members interested in natural cosmetics. With one reminder email on February 4, 2022, the total number of respondents was 724. The target was 200; therefore, this was more than expected. After one week with 89 responses, the saturation point was already reached because answers started to repeat. In addition, the open-ended questions offered additional information with more replies. Therefore, the questionnaire was closed to replies on February 8, 2022.

Background questions and customer profile

In this questionnaire, 28,5% of respondents were from the age group 30-39 years old. Next was the age group 40-49, with 21,5%. Followed by the 50-59-year-old group with 18,3%. Finally, 17,2% of respondents were in the 20-29 age group. Respondents from the 16-19 age group made up only 1%. From my point of view, this might be a good new target group.

The majority (94,7%) of respondents were women. On the other hand, 2,8% of respondents were men, 1% were other, and 1,5% declined to share this information. This result was not surprising, as Ruohonjuuri's customer base has been mainly female.

Results revealed that 49,9% of respondents live in the Uusimaa area. This area has several retail locations, yet the respondents still like to order online. The second-largest geographic segment was Varsinais-Suomi, with 12,2%. Also, in Varsinais-Suomi there are two Ruohonjuuri stores. They were followed by 8,6% coming from Pirkanmaa, where there is a Ruohonjuuri store in the heart of Tampere. 7,6% of respondents are from Pohjois-Pohjanmaa and 5,8% from Keski-Suomi.

In this questionnaire, 63,4% of respondents had an academic education. 36% had a bachelor's degree, 25,3% had a master's degree, and 1,7% had a Ph.D. In addition, 17,2% of respondents had an upper secondary education, and 15% highest education level was secondary school.

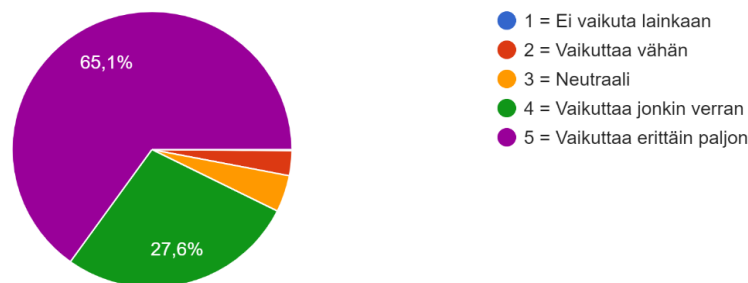
The customer profile based on this survey is an educated woman aged 30-60 living in the Uusimaa and is Ruohonjuuri's most typical customer. This questionnaire shows that young people have not found Ruohonjuuri yet. These background questions' results are included in appendix 1 of this thesis.

Common questions

As Figure 15 shows, 65,1% of respondents highly valued products made from natural ingredients. In addition, 27,6% thought that it matters somewhat. This was expected as Ruohonjuuri sells natural cosmetics. Also, it was interesting to learn that not all of Ruohonjuuri's membership customers found natural ingredients to be obligatory. Some respondents hoped that there would be a bigger selection of fragrance-free products.

1. Miten tärkeänä asiana pidät sitä, että tuote on luonnonkosmetiikkaa?

722 vastausta



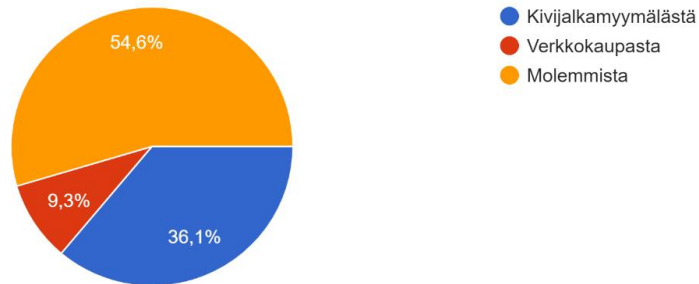
Blue = it does not matter at all, Red = it matters slightly, Yellow = neutral, Green = it matters somewhat, Purple = it matters a lot

Figure 15. The importance of whether a cosmetic is natural.

As Figure 16 shows, 54,6% of respondents replied that they prefer buying natural cosmetics both online and from stores. However, 36,1% of respondents would prefer to buy from a retail location, and only 9,3% preferred to make their purchases online. Some replied that they often went to the store to test cosmetics and then ordered the products online. In contrast, some customers would look up product information on the store's website and then purchase the product at a brick-and-mortar location. The most significant advantage to shopping in-store was being able to try cosmetics on their skin. It was also mentioned that the surprise of finding something new and being able to see the cosmetics in person was essential to some of the respondents.

2. Mistä ostat mieluummin luonnonkosmetiikkaa?

720 vastausta



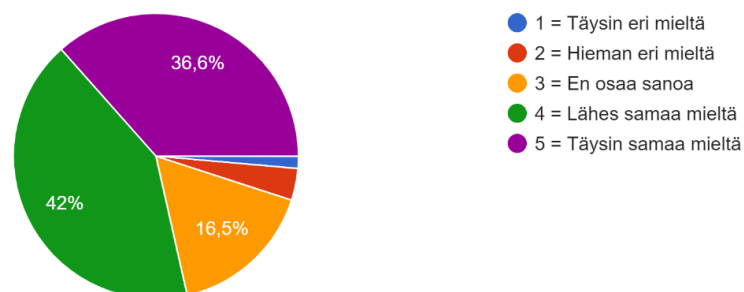
Blue = From a store, Red = From online store, Yellow = From both

Figure 16. Where do you prefer to buy natural cosmetics?

Figure 17 summarizes opinions about selection; 36,6% of respondents answered that they completely agree that Ruohonjuuri has a good selection of natural products. Furthermore, 42,2% of respondents somewhat agreed, and 16,5% could not say they probably did not know the selection well enough. Finally, there was an open-ended question asking if there were some brands or products that respondents felt should be in Ruohonjuuri's online store. This question collected 236 replies, which correlates with membership customers' activity.

3. Ruohonjuuren verkkokaupassa on tarpeeksi laaja valikoima luonnonkosmetiikkatuotteita.

722 vastausta



Blue = Strongly disagree, Red = Somewhat disagree, Yellow = Neither agree nor disagree, Green = Somewhat agree, Purple = Strongly agree

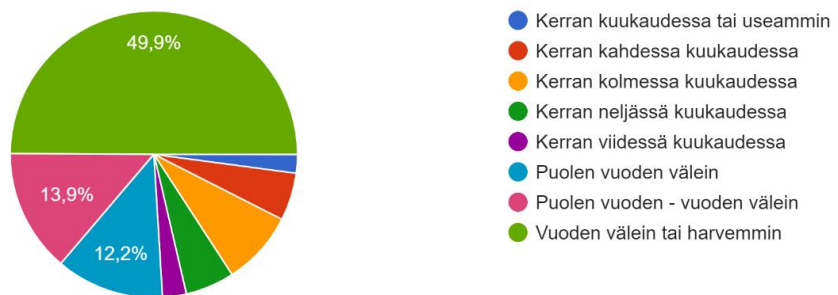
Figure 17. Whether Ruohonjuuri's online store has a good selection of natural cosmetics.

Ordering natural cosmetics and subscriptions

As presented in Figure 18, the majority (49,9%) ordered from Ruohonjuuri's online store once a year or less. 13,9% of respondents replied that they order once between six months to one year. 12,2% of respondents order once every six months.

5. Miten usein tilaat luonnonkosmetiikkaa verkkokaupastamme?

707 vastausta



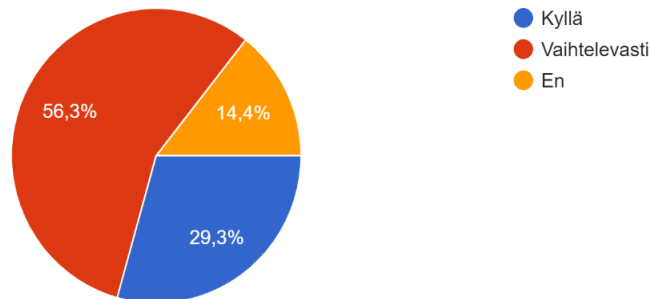
Blue = Once a month or more often, Red = Once in 2 months, Yellow = Once in 3 months, Green = Once in 4 months, Purple = Once in 5 months, Light blue = Once in 6 months, Pink = Once between 6 to 12 months, Light green = Once a year or more rearer

Figure 18. Online ordering frequency.

Figure 19 below shows that 29,3% of respondents mainly ordered the same products every time. In addition, 56,3% replied that they occasionally order the same product and occasionally try new products. On the other hand, 14,4% of respondents answered that they are not ordering the same products every time.

6. Tilaatko usein samoja luonnonkosmetiikkatuotteita?

709 vastausta

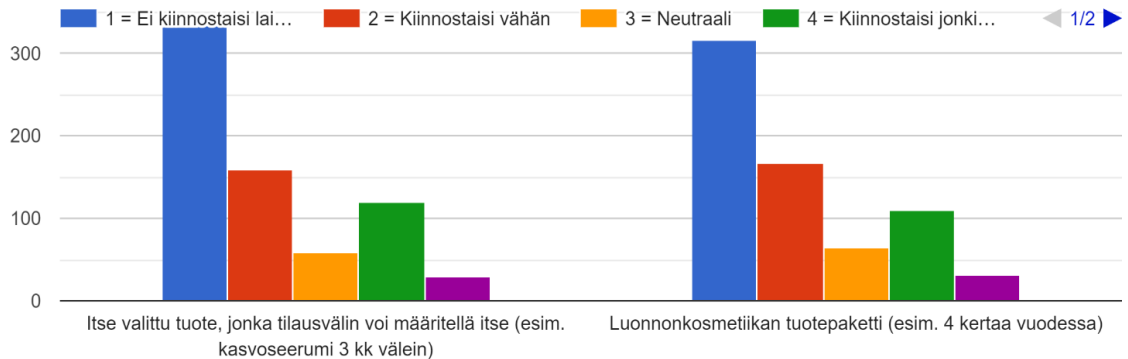


Blue = Yes, Red = Occasionally, Yellow = No

Figure 19. Are customers ordering the same products every time?

When asked if the respondent would be interested in a regular natural cosmetics subscription, the majority were not interested at all. This question was in two parts; as seen in Figure 20, the first option asked about subscribing to one selected product. Only 30 respondents were very interested, and 119 were somewhat interested. 333 respondents replied that they were not interested in this option at all. The second part of this question asked about a natural cosmetic beauty box that would be delivered four times a year. Outcomes were similar; 31 respondents were very interested, 110 respondents were somewhat interested, and 316 were not interested.

7. Miten kiinnostunut olisit tilaamaan luonnonkosmetiikan tuotteita kestopilauksella?



One selected product, which ordering frequency decided by yourself

Beauty box

(for example, face serum after every 3 months)

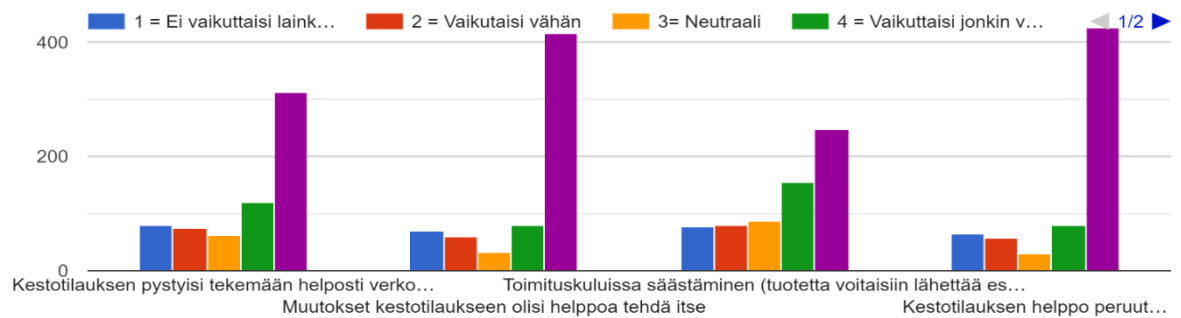
(for example 4 times a year)

Blue = Not interested, Red = Slightly interested, Yellow = Neutral, Green = Somewhat interested, Purple = Extremely interested

Figure 20. How interested would respondents be in a natural cosmetics subscription?

Figure 21 illustrates that 425 respondents appreciated the ability to change or cancel subscriptions easily. It is easier to subscribe and try something new if it's easy to cancel. This is closely followed by the ability to make changes to their subscription independently. For 415 respondents, this matters a lot when deciding on a subscription service. Also, 313 respondents liked that it would be easy to independently sign up for a subscription online. Saving on delivery costs by buying in bulk came last. Only 248 respondents answered that this would highly affect their decision when selecting a subscription service.

13. Miten todennäköisesti seuraavat asiat vaikuttaisivat päätökseesi tehdä kestopilaus?



Subscription would be easy to do online, Subscription would be easy to modify, Save on delivery costs, Subscription would be easy to cancel

Blue = Would not matter at all, Red = Would matter slightly, Yellow = Neutral, Green = Would matter somewhat, Purple = Would matter a lot

Figure 21. How these proposed options would affect respondents' decision to subscribe.

Customer experience

Customer experiences vary widely, as presented in Figure 22. The majority of respondents, 66,1%, described their experience in Ruohonjuuri online as a routine, prosaic experience. One respondent commented that they didn't want their experience to be anything other than ordinary. On the other hand, 28,3% thought that their typical experience was mindful or memorable. This means that something surprised them in a good way or that things went extremely smoothly. For 5,5% of respondents, the experience was meaningful or even transformational. Customer experiences and comments about Ruohonjuuri's online store are presented in Figure 23.

14. Asiakaskokemukset voivat olla luonteeltaan hyvin erityyppisiä. Mikä seuraavista vastaa parhaiten tyypillistä asiakaskokemustasi verkkokaupassamme?

688 vastausta



Blue = Prosaic experience; routine, Red = Mindful or memorable experience; extraordinary and touching, Yellow = WOW experience, meaningful or transformational; personal or building values, attitudes, and behaviors

Figure 22. Customer experience types.

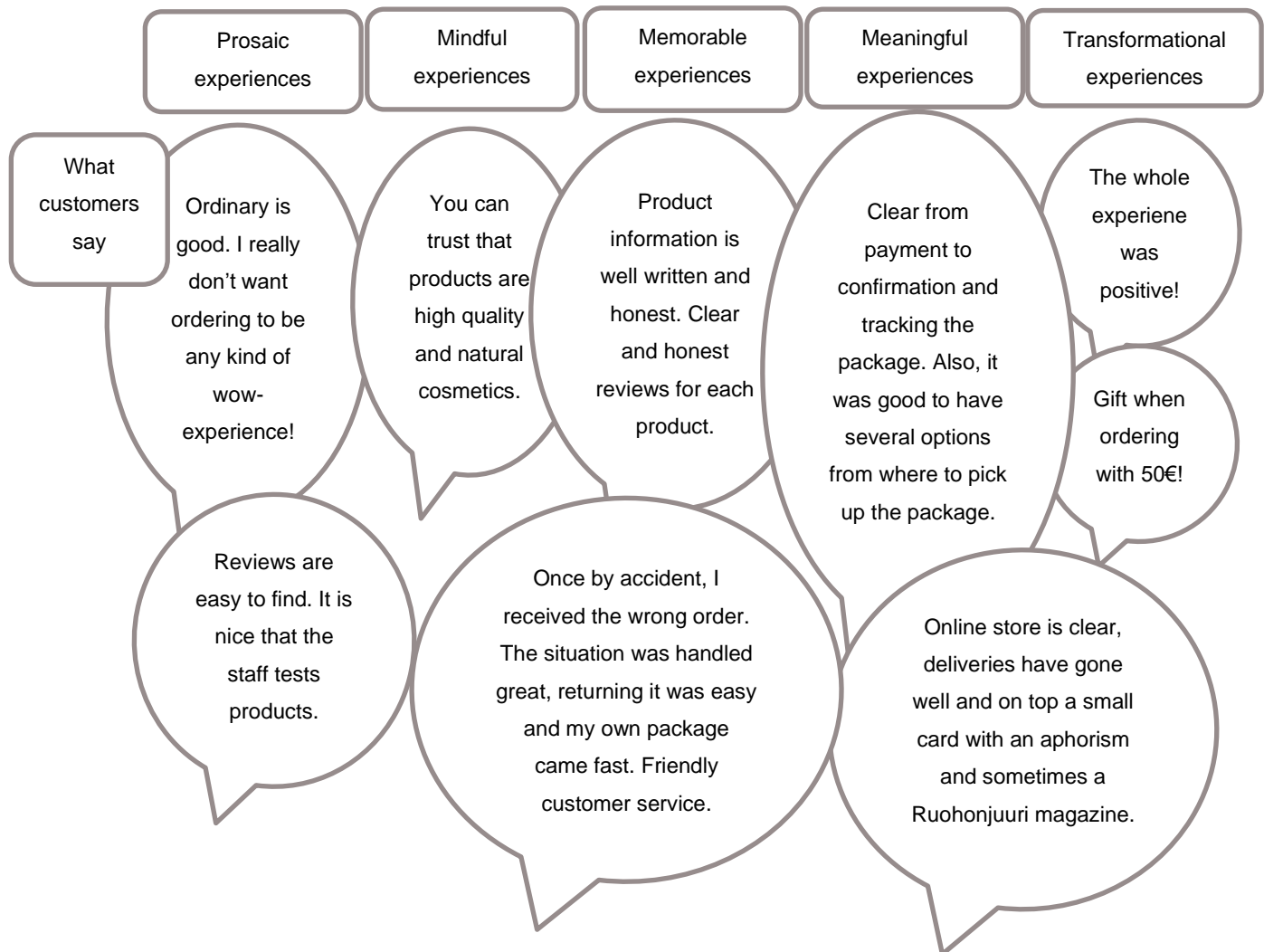
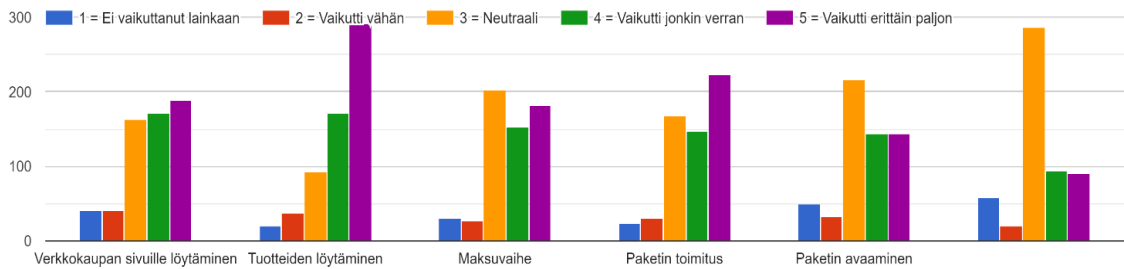


Figure 23. Customer experiences and comments about Ruohonjuuri's online store.

As one can see from Figure 24, the most crucial touchpoint to a successful customer experience was navigating and finding products. 291 respondents thought that it mattered a lot. 223 respondents greatly appreciated the delivery process, followed by finding the Ruohonjuuri online store and then the payment process. Finding the Ruohonjuuri online store and payment came right after. The majority were neutral about unboxing. Also, the results show that most of the respondents did not contact customer service. For those respondents who contacted customer service, the experience was mainly extremely pleasant.

17. Muistele onnistunutta asiakaskokemusta verkkokaupassamme. Mitkä kohdat asiakaspolusta vaikuttivat kokemuksen onnistumiseen?



Finding Ruohonjuuri's online store, navigating products, payment, delivery, unboxing, and contacting customer service

Blue = did not effect at all, Red = affected slightly, Yellow = neutral, Green = affected somewhat, Purple = affected a lot

Figure 24. Touchpoints' effect on a successful customer experience.

In this questionnaire, 305 respondents replied that they were extremely satisfied that they could easily access services in their picked channel. This is one of the good features of an online store. Also, 232 respondents gave the highest marks to quick delivery. Most neutral replies had statements such as: "It felt like that they were interested in my issues," "I experienced that I was met on a personal level," and "My expectations were exceeded." This was probably because these respondents did not contact customer service. These statements are not easy to overcome in the online store.

When asked which virtual and digital services might help them make purchasing decisions about expensive natural cosmetics; highly influential features were:

1. The ability to try makeup tones with your picture. (109 responses)
2. Webinars that present products. (107 responses)
3. Webinars that present how to use products. (100 responses)

Other services that might help them make purchasing decisions about expensive natural cosmetics; highly influential factors were:

1. The option to order free cosmetic samples. (375 responses)
2. Being able to try cosmetics in store. (291 responses)
3. Any easy return policy. (284 responses)

The features that would somewhat affect their decision were: customer reviews (272 responses), a beauty consultation based on a questionnaire (173 responses), and a cosmetologist chat service (168 responses). Many respondents were also interested in buying cosmetics samples. This way, they could try the product and make sure that the chosen product fits their skin before making a purchasing decision. Naturally, free samples were a more attractive option, but 114 respondents were also interested in buying samples, and 207 respondents were somewhat interested in buying samples. Figure 25 shows that 66,1% of respondents thought a reasonable sample price would be 0,50-1€.

On the other hand, 31,1% of respondents were ready to pay 1,5-2€, and 2,8% of respondents' price limit reached 2,5-3€. One respondent commented that cosmetic testers would be good because she has sensitive skin, and not all products are suitable for her. When testers are not available, it is difficult to buy anything new without testing it first.

22. Mikä olisi mielestäsi sopiva hinta maksullisille tuotenäytteille?

688 vastausta

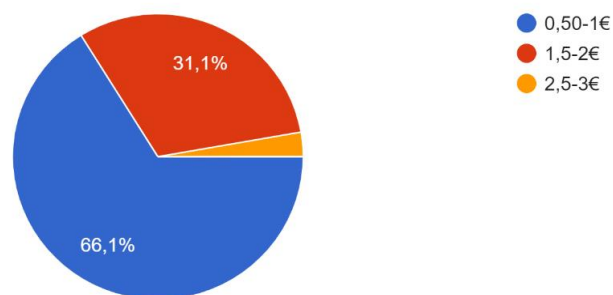


Figure 25. What is a reasonable price for cosmetic samples?

The majority of respondents (608) thought that the newest offers and campaigns were the most relevant information on an online store's first page. 344 votes went to new products, and after those, 309 votes went to delivery costs.

Outcomes

This questionnaire aimed to find out which new services Ruohonjuuri's customers would be interested in using to make natural cosmetic purchasing decisions easier. In the first questionnaire, features like cosmetic samples and subscriptions came up, and the second questionnaire contained more detailed questions about these topics. The first questionnaire was addressed to consumers who purchase natural cosmetics online, and the second questionnaire was addressed to Ruohonjuuri's customers. Even though 29,3% of respondents answered that they were mainly ordering the same products from the online store, the percentage of those who were interested in a subscription was very low. Therefore, it seems that Ruohonjuuri's customers are not interested in this option as it was presented in this questionnaire. Structured one-on-one interviews are an excellent opportunity to get more detailed information about suggested options. There is a possibility that this service can be improved. One suggestion is to focus on new customer groups in the future. An interesting group is Generation Z. This questionnaire showed that the age group 16-19 was small at only 1%. Nowadays, when children's self-determination starts from age 10, at the age of 16, the majority of youth order online independently. The questionnaire results show that the age group 20-29 was already active online customers, with 17,2% of respondents. More detailed questions could be asked of young people to find out their purchasing habits and wishes. Would they be interested in a "my first skincare products" box? Which channels are they following and using?

The majority of respondents, 94,7%, were women. It would be one topic to research how they feel about Ruohonjuuri's outfit. Logo and colors, are they attractive to women? What if there were a more feminine color for cosmetics? This could be one way to reach out to new customer groups.

Free cosmetic samples would be a good improvement. Even for a small price, most customers would be willing to pay it. The majority of respondents felt happy when receiving a small gift or cosmetic sample with delivery. This is also one way to test new products. Although unboxing was not highly appreciated, many customers still mentioned that receiving a Ruohonjuuri magazine or a small card with an aphorism felt good. One idea would be to include expired products with an order. This would go in line with Ruohonjuuri's values like sustainability. This way, customers could try new products. As this might not appeal attractive to all customers, they could have an option to receive this extra gift.

This questionnaire shows that the personal customer service sector could be improved. Not everyone will need to contact customer service, so making the service more personal is challenging.

3.4 One-on-one interviews review

In this chapter, key findings from interviews will be presented. One-on-one interviews were held after a second survey addressed to Ruohonjuuri membership customers. One-on-one interview questions are visible in their original Finnish form in Appendix 2. As explained earlier, these structured interviews aimed to collect more detailed information and insights. In addition, four interviews were held remotely with women aged 30-60. Interviewees were picked from a survey questionnaire addressed to Ruohonjuuri's membership customers. The primary reason for choosing interviewees was their enthusiasm to influence and participate in developing Ruohonjuuri online store services. They were contacted via email after the questionnaire was closed for replies. Figure 26 presents buyer persona created based on interviews and surveys. In this chapter, key findings from the interviews are presented.

Online behavior

All interviewees like to make their purchases both online and occasionally in-store. However, buying habits changed significantly due to the pandemic for two of them. They have been ordering almost everything online for nearly the past

two years. One interviewee has been ordering online for eight years due to convenience. It makes everyday life easier not having to carry purchases home, and it gives them a chance to spend more time with family. One interviewee describes online shopping as luxurious. The package is delivered to the nearest post locker, and it is easy to pick up while taking a dog out for a walk. It is mentioned more than once that when shopping online, it is easier to order products that they are familiar with, especially when it comes to natural cosmetics.

Visiting a store

All interviewees like to visit a store when they want to test new products, and some of them also mentioned that they also like the personal customer service available in a store. One interviewee likes to visit a store to get that surprise effect, never knowing what can be found. Additionally, it was said that it is easier to visualize products in a store and try them on your skin. For all the interviewees, trying color products such as foundations on their own skin was essential to find the right tone. Ruohonjuuri offers customers the option of a test-sized amount of cosmetic product in a small container to try at home. One interviewee said that she really appreciated this because it is nice to be able to test facial products before buying a full-sized product.

Thoughts about subscription

A subscription to natural cosmetics does not sound attractive to all four interviewees. Two of them would possibly subscribe to detergents, and one of them mentions everyday products such as soaps. These products are often the same every time, and it is nice not to be reminded when to repurchase them. One interviewee's reason not to subscribe to natural cosmetics is that products are changing and improving rapidly. Also, even if one interviewee often uses the same facial products, they vary throughout the year and are seasonal. Therefore, a chance to modify the subscription would be an essential feature. One interviewee said that her skin requires her to change facial skin products every now and then to get the best result.

Beauty subscription boxes prompted divided opinions. One interviewee's opinion was that it is probably not for Ruohonjuuri's target group. In her opinion, it is better suited for fast fashion consumers. On the other hand, two interviewees were interested in a beauty subscription box. One interviewee would most likely be interested in subscribing if the price would be between 20-40€ and was delivered quarterly. A suitable number of products could be 4-6 in each box. Also, she suggested that QR-codes be included that contain more information about each product and how to use them, which would be easy to find. One interviewee was interested in a "starter kit for young men" because she has a son who would be in a target group. The box could include smaller sizes of facial products for two weeks' needs. She feels that it is not easy to convince young people to try natural cosmetics unless it is a trend. With smaller sizes, getting them to test products could be easier.

Touchpoints in the online store

Navigating and finding products easily was important to all interviewees. From one interviewee's point of view, CX should be improved at early touchpoints rather than last touchpoints, such as unboxing. In her opinion, a customer can not concentrate for a long time; therefore, products should be easily found. Otherwise, customers might leave the online store and shop somewhere else. Even a small gesture can make CX memorable. For example, when visiting an online store, there could be a personalized greeting such as "Welcome back, Sanna, remember to buy coffee." One interviewee would like it if navigating and searching for products would be based not only on a product or brand name but also on a problem or issue. For example, it was not easy to find these categories when she was looking for skin products based on her skin type. One idea was that when adding a product to a basket in an online store, there could be a nudge to show customer reviews about that product or tips on using that product.

It was clear from the questionnaire results that unboxing was not listed as a notable touchpoint regarding successful CX. Still, a Ruohonjuuri magazine and a small card with an aphorism were highly appreciated delivered in a package. The majority of interviewees liked the idea of receiving a small gift product in a

package. One interviewee suggested that there could be a question from which category the customer would like to receive a surprise product or small sample when ordering. There would be a surprise effect this way, but it would spare the customer from receiving a product that she does not want or need. However, when it comes to natural cosmetics that are past the best before date, it could be risky to give them as gifts. One interviewee had negative feelings about this because she would feel that the product would not be valid anymore.

In one interview, there was a good idea for the Christmas season. The interviewee had been ordering Christmas gifts from an online store, and she had hoped that there would be an option to have the products gift-wrapped or at least have Christmas bags, boxes, or other material included. Then, especially during the pandemic, Christmas gifts would be easy to ship directly to the receiver.

Factors affecting the purchasing decision

All interviewees thought that the option to order cosmetic samples (either free or at a low price) would make purchasing decisions much easier. Samples would be most wanted from products such as foundations and powders. Choosing the right foundation tone without testing was almost impossible for most interviewees. This was followed by facial products such as cleansing, day and night creams, and eye creams. Those products are most related to skin type, and it is essential to know how skin reacts before buying a full-sized product. One interviewee shared the idea that there could be an option to purchase cosmetic samples after entering payment details.

Three interviewees thought that trying makeup products virtually with their own pictures was a good idea and might help with making a purchasing decision. However, one interviewee thought this would perhaps add more value for younger consumers and did not see herself using this service.

Tutorials and webinars were welcomed based on these interviews. One interviewee said that the wow factor could be achieved with tutorials, for example, how to do eye brown makeup. Also, professionals' tips on how to use products in several ways were wanted. One interviewee had an idea that popups with customer reviews or professionals' tips could show up when adding items to the basket.

Other ideas and hopes

One interviewee hoped that there would be a chance to pick which offers and new arrivals would be seen on the front page. She was only interested in seeing natural cosmetics and therefore wished there would be an option to select specific categories. It was also mentioned that delivery fees should be easy to find.

One interview was intense and focused on the center of the topic. Planning a good CX starts with the management group setting goals and the company's strategy. The interviewee's opinion was that rather than trying to improve one element separately, it should be led by strategy and vision. Questions like; "What is the tone of voice?" and "What do we want to deliver?" should be asked. After all, making the CX better and more personal could be done even with small details which would be memorable.

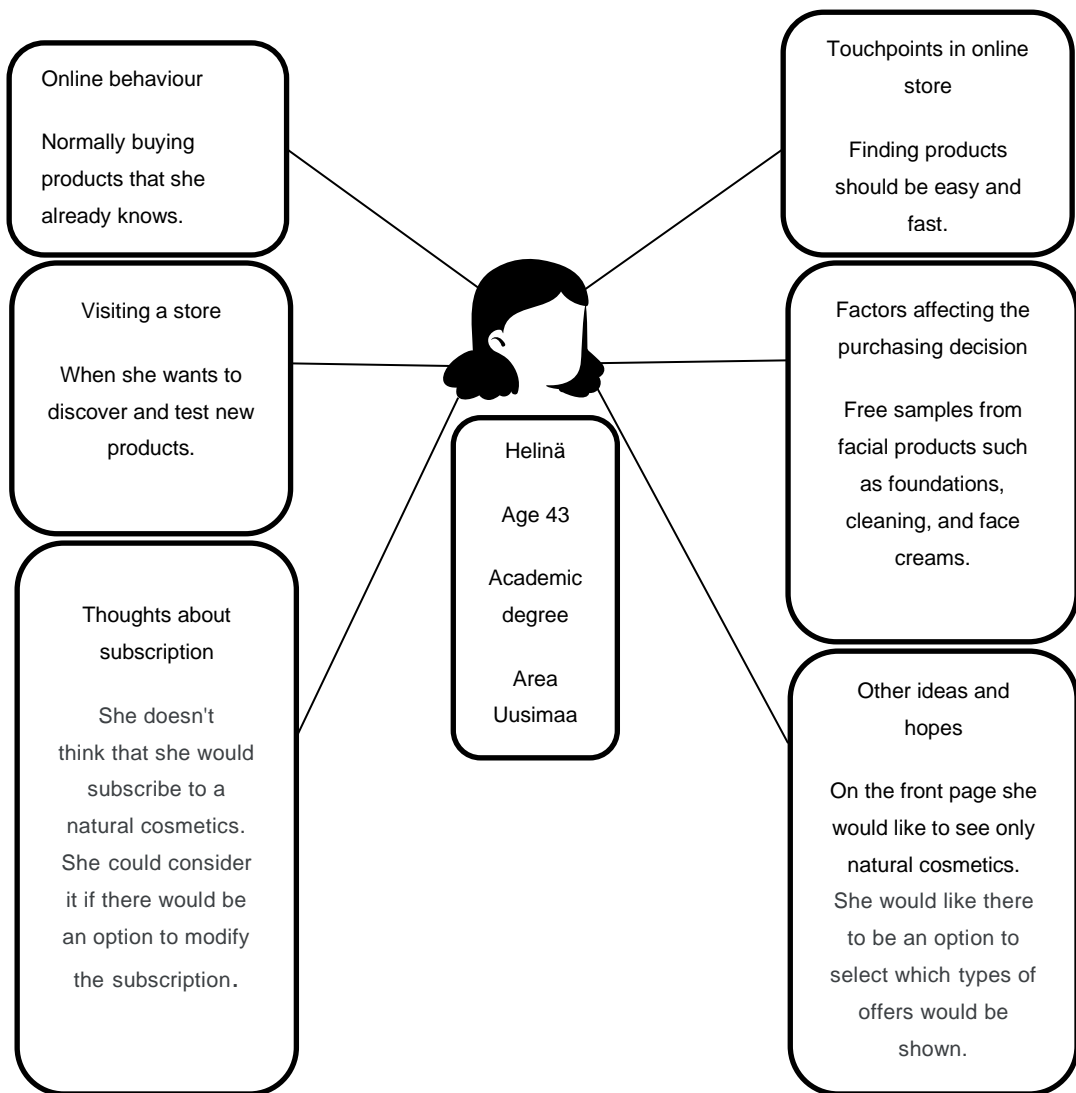


Figure 26. A buyer persona.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Customer journey in Ruohonjuuri's online store

The questionnaire reveals that most respondents appreciated that landing on the front page was easy and liked seeing new products and offers. One interviewee noted that the front page could be categorized, and there could be an option which offers would be shown there. For example, some customers are only interested to see natural cosmetics instead of superfoods and other healthcare products. Also, delivery costs would be good to see on the front page.

The questionnaire indicates that navigating the products is the most critical touchpoint to gaining a good CX. Furthermore, many respondents said that navigating and finding products in Ruohonjuuri's online store was easy. Still, some respondents hoped for clearer categorization based on skin type. Referring to Kurjenoja (2021) and Statista's consumer survey mentioned in the thesis introduction, one of the essential criteria for Finnish people purchasing decisions was the product's suitability for skin type. In one-on-one interviews, one interviewee said that searching with an issue not only with a product name would be a good improvement.

Results of the questionnaire discover that respondents did not contact customer service often. Even the chat was something that some respondents did not even know about. But on the other hand, the respondents who had contacted customer service were satisfied with friendly and professional customer service.

Adding products to the basket and payment was a critical touchpoint because these essential functions must work smoothly. However, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the payment, and it was also mentioned that several delivery options were appreciated. In addition, one interviewee said that there could be nudges with tips on how to use the product after payment. Also, an opportunity to order cosmetic samples either free or at a low price before payment would be welcomed.

Package delivery was an essential touchpoint for respondents. Respondents appreciated that they could pick from several options, such as packages delivered to a home, the nearest post locker, or the nearest Ruohonjuuri store. Although the unboxing touchpoint was not mentioned as remarkable, respondents still liked small samples, a Ruohonjuuri magazine, or a card with an aphorism included in a package. Customer journey in Ruohonjuuri's online store is illustrated in Figure 27. The customer is looking for natural cosmetics suitable for her skin type. Navigating products with skin type or issue makes CX better. Some products can be perfect without testing, and some are not ideal for a customer. The solution could be free or low price cosmetic samples.

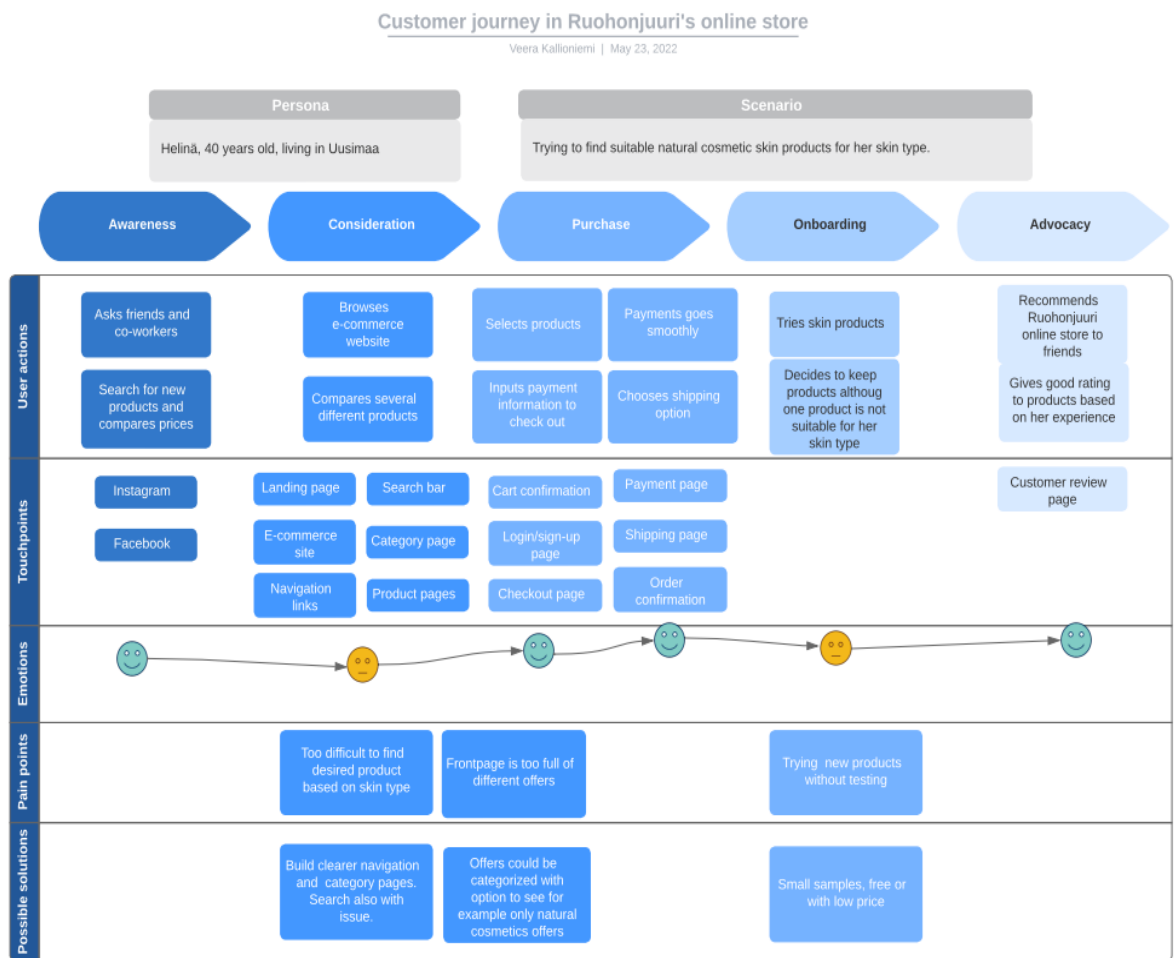


Figure 27. Customer journey in Ruohonjuuri's online store.

4.2 Concept

Referring to the Blue ocean strategy theory presented in chapter 2.4 by Kim and Mauborgne, CX can be defined throughout four action frameworks. The four building blocks are; reduce, create, raise and eliminate. (Kim & Mauborgne, 2020, 220.) These research results aimed to find new services and develop existing services to increase CX in Ruohonjuuri's online store, as summarized in Figure 28. Therefore, this research did not focus on features that should be reduced or eliminated. Instead, factors that should be raised were; improving the search bar and categorizing products more clearly based on skin type. In addition, the search bar should work not only with product names but also with issue words. Also, categorization for the front page with an option to choose which categories are offered and new arrivals will be seen there.

One new service suggested was natural cosmetic samples ordered for free or low price, helping customers with purchasing decisions. Questionnaire results indicate that an essential feature when buying natural cosmetics is their suitability to skin type. This supports the importance of having small samples. Samples can be accessible for customers to order or even included in the delivery package as a gift. As a surprise gift, it will increase unboxing value, giving customers a chance to try new products. As mentioned in chapter 2, Puustinen & Saarijärvi claim that small but unexpected touchpoints in a customer journey can support a good CX (Saarijärvi & Puustinen, 2020, 67-77).

This research result shows that most customers using natural cosmetics are following and willing to try new products as this field is changing and improving rapidly. Therefore there could be a demand for a beauty box. The subscription was not an attractive option for respondents; even if it would be convenient, the desire for new products was more important. Customers are craving new arrivals, which is why a beauty box could work. Also, the surprise effect mentioned, which was more easily reached in-store, could be delivered in and from the online store. The beauty box could include the newest natural cosmetics and be delivered quarterly.

Nudges about products and tips on using them would be inspiring to see when adding products to the basket. Nudges can be informative and convenient when used in the right place at the right time and add value for customers. Also, trying make-up tones virtually with a face picture was a popular option in this research. Due to the pandemic, customers are more used to handling everything online.

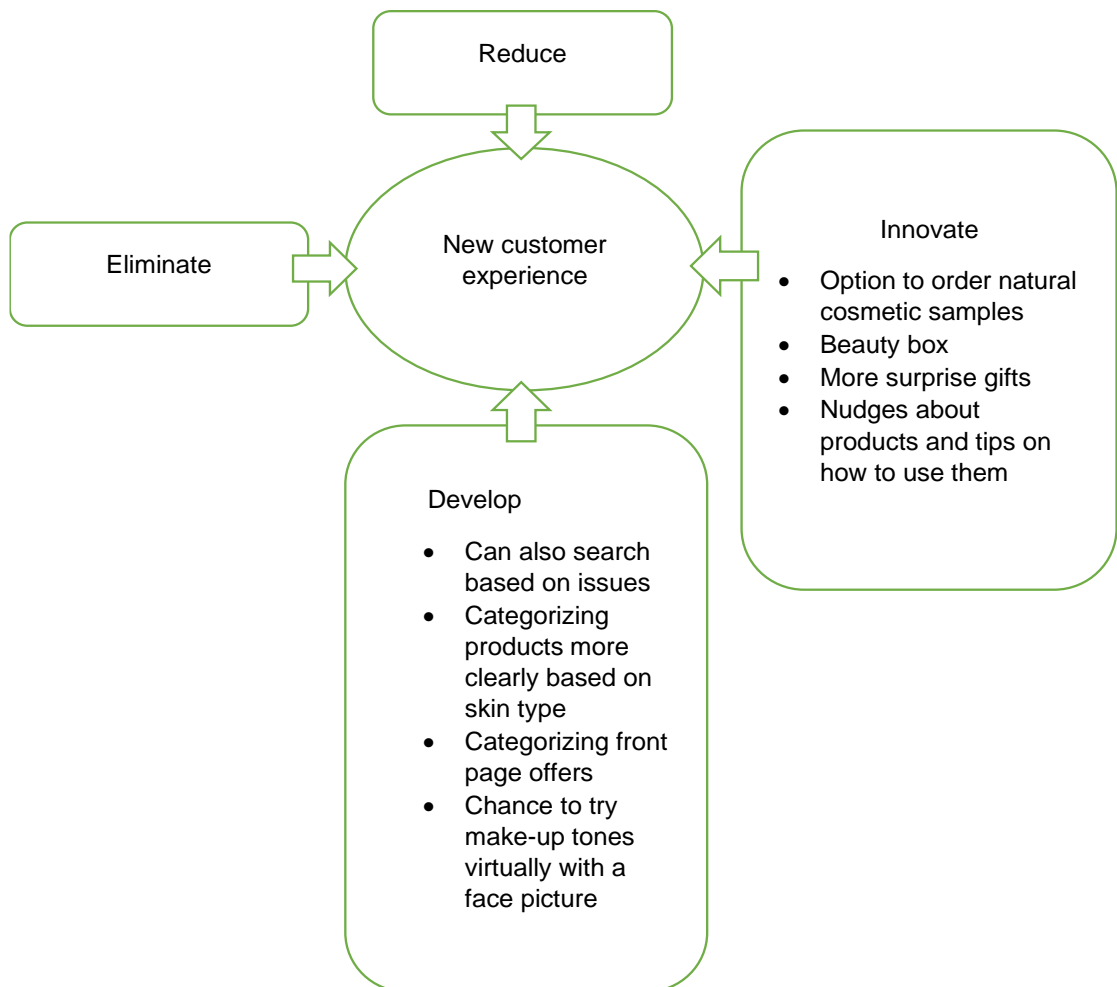


Figure 28. The concept for innovating and developing services.

5 Summary

Customer experience is increasingly often in digital format as digitalization has become more common. There are several ways to uplift CX online but listening to what customers want is essential. Therefore, this thesis aimed to create a new concept with suggestions on how to improve Ruohonjuuri's online store's natural cosmetic online services. The concept was designed based on benchmarking and customers' opinions and desires for new services. The research followed Kim's and Mauborgne's four actions framework blue ocean strategy. This chapter describes the research process, findings, learnings, and suggestions for future research in this area.

The research started by reading literature about digitalization, customer experience, and nudging. First, research questions were formulated, and then methods and tools were picked that could be used to achieve the desired outcome. The research questions were; Q1. How to improve natural cosmetic online services? And Q2. How to help customers with decision-making when purchasing expensive natural cosmetics? Then the context for questionnaires and interviews was planned.

The first questionnaire provided information about the ongoing online market environment. It helped to benchmark competitors and gave general insight into what customers appreciated about online stores, especially when purchasing natural cosmetics. Results revealed that the most critical touchpoint was navigating and finding products. Features that affected good CX the most were; friendly customer service, fast response time, and reliable deliveries. For most respondents' online store reliability was essential, although surprisingly, domesticity did not matter much.

The second questionnaire addressed Ruohonjuuri's membership customers and suggested new services and the customer journey in Ruohonjuuri's online store. The aim was to find out how to improve the customer journey throughout touchpoints and which new services could be added. Also focusing on which existing services could be developed further. The second questionnaire results

show that navigating was the most critical point in making CX pleasant. Therefore, the final concept contains ideas on improving navigation by developing search bar functionality and categorizing products and front page offers. The answer to the second research question; How to help customers with decision-making when purchasing expensive natural cosmetics? First, by creating an opportunity or option to order natural cosmetic samples in order to test their desired products before buying them. Also, for some respondents, the chance of using artificial intelligence to try makeup tones virtually with their face pictures would make the purchasing decision easier. In addition, marketing tutorials and webinars about natural cosmetics also significantly impacted the respondents' buying decisions because those helped customers get familiar with the products.

The interviews helped to gather even more ideas and insights. For example, interviews revealed that customers are missing the surprise effect that can be experienced in a store when trying and discovering new products. Therefore, most interviewees liked the idea of a subscription beauty box. Based on this research, I believe the subscription beauty box is worth looking into in future research projects. Results indicate that at this time, customers are not ready for regular subscriptions for natural cosmetic products. However, the idea was new to most respondents, and even though it would be convenient and easy, it did not receive much support. On the other hand, interviewees were interested in subscribing to detergents and everyday hygiene products such as soaps.

The second questionnaire and interview results indicate that personalizing CX in Ruohonjuuri's online store could be developed further. For example, it could be done with digital nudges, which came up in interviews. With digital nudges, CX could be more personalized, and the company's tone of voice would be heard. Finally, research revealed that Ruohonjuuri's main customer group was middle-aged, educated women living in the Uusimaa area. Therefore, the future focus target group could be generation Z. This would be a new interesting topic for research.

Due to the pandemic, customers' purchasing habits are changing, and digitalization is growing faster. As a result, customers are making decisions in digital environments daily. Therefore, it is wise to put more resources into developing online services – based on this thesis; the future is there.

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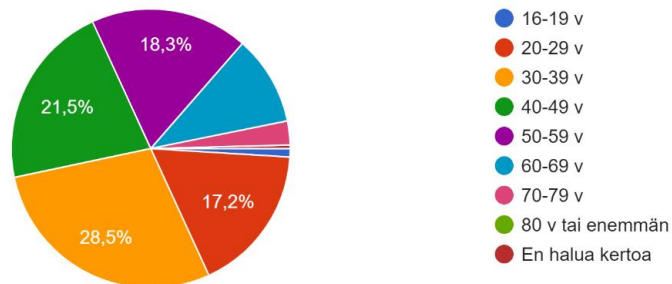
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Appendix 1. Second questionnaire figures

Background questions from the second questionnaire for Ruohonjuuri's membership customers

24. Mihin ikäryhmään kuulut?

722 vastausta

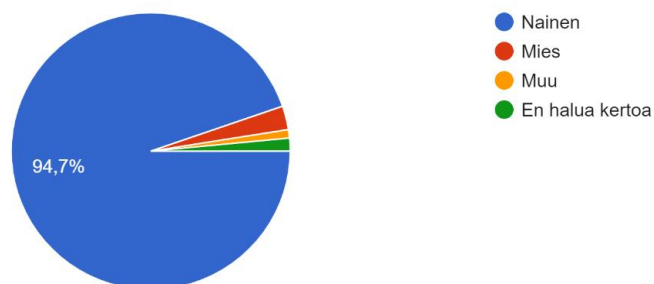


Blue = 16-19 years old, Red = 20-29 years old, Yellow = 30-39 years old, Green = 40-49 years old, Purple = 50-59 years old, Light blue = 60-69 years old, Pink = 70-79 years old, Light green = 80 years old or more Ruby red = prefer not to answer

Figure 29. Respondents' age groups.

25. Mikä on sukupuolesi?

721 vastausta



Blue = Woman, Red = Man, Yellow = Other, Green = I don't want to tell

Figure 30. Respondents' gender.

26. Missä maakunnassa asut?

721 vastausta

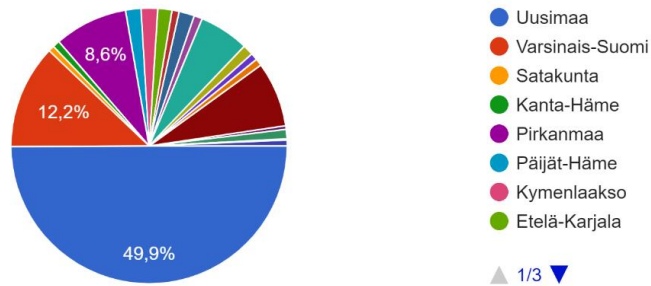
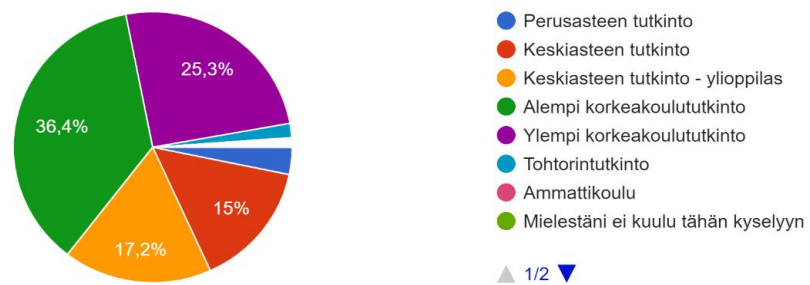


Figure 31. Where respondents are located.

27. Mikä on korkein saavuttamasi koulutustaso?

708 vastausta



Blue = elementary school, Red = secondary school, Yellow = upper secondary school, Green = bachelor's degree, Purple = master's degree, Light blue = Ph.D., Pink = technical collage, Light green = not applicable

Figure 32. Respondents' educational background.

Appendix 2. One-on-one interview questions in their original Finnish form

Yksilöhaastattelujen kysymykset

- 1) Noin 65% vastaajista pitää luonnonkosmetiikkaa erittäin tärkeänä asiana. 27,6% on sitä mieltä, että se vaikuttaa jonkin verran. Miltä sinusta tuntuisi, jos valikoimissa olisi muitakin kuin luonnonkosmetiikan tuotteita? Hajusteettomia tuotteita on toivottu paljon.
- 2) Suurin osa vastaajista ostaa luonnonkosmetiikkaa sekä kivijalkamyymälästä että verkosta. Suurin syy ostaa kivijalkamyymälästä? Suurin syy ostaa verkosta?
- 3) Miksi tilaat samoja tuotteita? Tai miksi et tilaa samoja tuotteita?
- 4) Mitä tuotteita voisit kestopilata ja miksi?
- 5) Mitä ajatuksia kestopilaaminen herättää? Plussat ja miinukset
- 6) Kosmetiikan starttipaketti nuorelle tai kosmetiikan uutuuspaketti trenditietoiselle. Voisiko toimia?
- 7) Suurin osa (66,1 %) verkkokaupan asiakaskokemuksista koettiin arkiseksi. Arkinenkin voi olla hyvä kokemus, mutta miten tästä voitaisiin vielä parantaa?
- 8) Kosketuspisteistä tärkeimmäksi koettiin navigointi ja tuotteiden löytäminen. Se mitä ei koettu niin merkittäväksi vaiheeksi oli unboxing -paketin saapuminen. Mikä voisi tehdä tästä hetkestä vielä paremman? Mitä pitäisit kosmetiikkatuotelahjasta, jonka parasta ennen päiväys olisi jo mennyt?
- 9) Suurin osa vastaajista oli erittäin tyytyväisiä siihen, että he pystyivät saamaan haluamaansa palvelua haluamassaan kanavassa silloin kun sitä halusivat. Henkilökohtainen asiakaspalvelu jäi usein vähäiseksi, mikä

on ymmärrettävää, kun asioidaan verkkokaupassa. Millä tavoin tällaista tunnetta voitaisiin välittää digitaalisin keinoin?

10) Top 3 digiavusteiset palvelut:

- ✓ Mahdollisuus kokeilla meikkisävyjä virtuaalisesti omalla kuvalla
- ✓ Tuote-esittely webinaarina
- ✓ Videotutoriaali (tuotteen meikkiopastus)

Tuleeko näistä jotain mieleen, mitä erityisesti olisi hyvä olla?

11) Muut ostopäätöstä helpottavat palvelut

- ✓ Tuotenäytteet koettiin tärkeimmäksi asiaksi helpottamaan ostopäätöstä. Mistä tuotteista näytteitä olisi hyvä olla?
- ✓ Aloitussivulla haluttiin nähdä uusimmat tarjoukset ja kampanjat, uutuustuotteet ja toimituskulut.

Olisiko näissä Ruohonjuurella parannettavaa?

12) Jotain muita kehitysehdotuksia mistä ei olla vielä keskusteltu.